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PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE

PSM2

PSM2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW
Email: PSM2@FUTURENET.CO.UK
Tel: 01225 788157 • Fax: 01225 446019

ASSASSINATION METHODS

Editor Daniel 'Revolver' Griffiths
Art Editor Milf 'Strangulation' Coppock
Deputy Editor Daniel 'Smothering' Dawkins
Production Editor David 'Head In Acid' Cook
Deputy Art Editor Rich 'Hit And Run' Broughton
Staff Writer Nathan 'Vulcan Death Grip' Irvine
Staff Writer Andrew 'Turnip Up The Arse' Kelly

Contributors James White, Sarah Kennett, Kirsten Kearney, Richard Owen, Ben Richardson, Dave Harrison, Pete Webber, Steve Williams

ADVERTISING

Call: 01225 442244
Advertising Director Jayne Caple
Head of Sales Clare Williamson
Advertising Manager Clair Raithby

DISPLAY ADVERTISING:
Head Of Trading Scott Longstaff
Account Managers Anne Mead-Green, Dan Robinson, Andrew Church, James Watson

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING:
Senior Sales Executive Alby Donnelly
Sales Executive Stuart Harris

PRODUCTION

Production Manager Rose Griffiths
Snr Production Coordinator Kirsty Bell
Marketing Product Manager Ben Payne
Colour Scanning Mark Gover, Jason Titley, Simon Windsor

EXECUTIVE STAFF

Non-Executive Chairman Roger Parry
Chief Executive Greg Ingham
Managing Director Robert Price
Group Finance Director John Bowman
Group Publisher Mia Walter
Editorial Director Jim Douglas
International Director Simon Wear
Head Of International Licensing Tim Hudson
Genius Mike Goldsmith

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

BELIEVE US: MAKING EACH ISSUE OF PSM2 IS CERTAINLY NO LAUGHING MATTER. YEAH RIGHT.

Baldly going where no (hit)man has gone before." That was one of our (instantly) rejected headlines for the *Hitman* cover this month. *Hilarious*. And it wasn't the worst: "Glove is all around (...my neck because you're strangling me)" was Nathan's contribution, cleverly noticing that Agent 47 was wearing gloves. And likes strangling people. *Well done Nathan* <spoken in the tone you'd use with a small child>. And who could *possibly ever* forget Andy's contribution to journalistic arts – "Always bet on... *bald*!" Yes, this actually happened. Jesus. Fact: Writing the *Hitman* coverline set the tone for a frantic, but brilliant, month.

Could it be the impending crash landing of Christmas? Or the feeling of closure and the anticipation of something even bigger and even more exciting? Better known as, er, 2006. Or the fact that if you don't laugh at some of the games that we've had to review this month, you'd end up taking a tear-stained axe to your PS2.

Looking back at the year, there's been so much to enjoy, it doesn't feel *right* to complain. Dammit – it's Xmas. So what if Sony can't produce a playable PS3? So what if Microsoft are currently getting all the glory with their Xbox 1.5? So what that there are no *genuinely brilliant* PSP games at all now, or at any stage in the coming months. Fact is, games *rock* and we're proud to write about them. Even *Barry Hatter*. Mostly.

Hopefully you might get this feeling as you read the mag. Provided you, er, skip those contents pages and 'special' ads at the back. Check out our Letters on page 10. Take the time to read our review of the year on page 83. Read the only genuine reviews of *50 Cent Bulletproof* and *Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones* on pages 56 and 48.

As you read this (probably while waiting for the James Bond film to start, or sat on a train taking you home to your loved ones) we hope you can share our joy. 2006 is going to be great. Flip to page 14 to see how great. You'll soon be playing *Metal Gear Solid 4* on PS3, watching YOUR Sky+ sat in a bar in the Maldives (see page 24 for details) and, at long last, getting your hands on some of the PS2's best games: *Black*, *Tomb Raider*, *Hitman* and more. There's a lot to be happy about. Merry Christmas. And a baldy new year. **The PSM2 Team**

PSM2 MAGAZINE PROMISE...

PSM2 is 100% independent. We write what we want, when we want. We don't ridicule popular opinion for the sake of controversy. Or generate hype without fact. Well, not *often*. We're not afraid to admit to our mistakes. And we're always first to put things right. We say it as we see it. Fact.

- Here at PSM2 we play every game we preview – that means genuine hands-on opinion, not what we've read about on the net.
- We're gamers just like you – and that's means we go into the kind of detail you demand. Check our sidebars for the latest facts and stats or screenshots that show off all the newest features.
- PSM2 is 100% editorially independent! You won't read the same quality of hard-hitting, informed, accurate – and, crucially, passionate – reviews anywhere else. And we can review games and reveal hardware other mags have to keep secret.
- We feature more screenshots than any other magazine. Especially at Christmas. Does *anyone* read this bit? Hello?

PS2 ON THE DVD

PS2 ON DVD

PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE + DVD
PSM2 DVD
DVD VIDEO
ALL THE METAL GEAR YOU NEED!
ON PS3! METAL GEAR SOLID 4 GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS
ON PS2! METAL GEAR SOLID 3 SUBSISTENCE
It's a Snake overload! New MGS across every format!
ON PSP! METAL GEAR ACID 2
BRAND NEW FOOTAGE!
BLACK
The new king of shooters blasts onto PS2. Hold onto your eyeballs!
IT'S HUGE!
VIDEO BLOWOUT!
47 STEAMING HOT GAME DEMOS!
FLIP FOR CONTENTS
NEXT-GEN RIDGE RACING!
RIDGE RACER 6
Ridge Racer burns onto PlayStation 3! See it take on the next generation!
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LATEST

Just in! The very latest gaming vids

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SUBSISTENCE

- FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS
- TOCA RACE DRIVER 3
- CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE
- FIFA STREET 2
- PAC-MAN WORLD 3
- AEON FLUX

HANDS ON

Exclusive footage from all the hot new games

BLACK

- PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES
- FINAL FIGHT: STREETWISE
- THE MOVIES
- WILD ARMS 4: THE FOURTH DETONATOR
- FLOW: URBAN DANCE UPRISING
- AND1 STREETBALL
- CRASH TAG TEAM RACING
- SUIKODEN V
- JACKED
- NFL HEAD COACH
- MORE!

REVIEWS

Reviews for new PS2 games with commentary

SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS

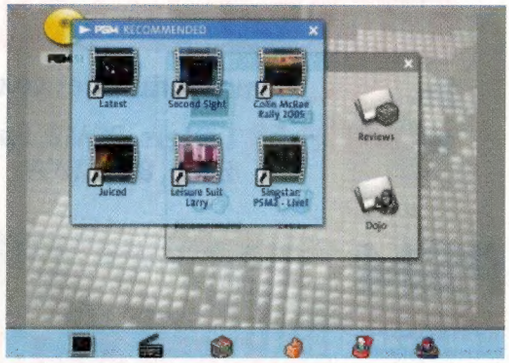
- SOUL CALIBUR 3
- WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2006
- PRO EVOLUTION 5
- KING KONG
- GUN
- FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE
- RATCHET GLADIATOR
- STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT 2
- WE LOVE KATAMARI
- EYETOY: PLAY 3

PS3

The newest PS3 movies around

- METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS
- CALL OF DUTY 2
- RIDGE RACER 6
- RUMBLE ROSES XX

HOW IT WORKS



■ Latest: Not a sub-menu, but a movie in its own right. This is the very latest vids, squeezed in at the last minute. And now you can skip forwards and back!
■ Hands-on: So big it comes in two parts. Select your part then click on the video you like the look of from the preview icons.
■ Reviews: All the latest games reviewed – complete with the famous PSM2 team commentary. Sick of hearing Andy wibbling on in Scottish? Click down R2 to switch to the game soundtrack.
■ PS3 and PSP: Now we have sections for the hottest new games on both new formats.
■ Recommended: Quick links to our personal favourite bits.
■ Extras: Quirky clips and... well... extra stuff and credits to enjoy.

SOUL CALIBUR 3

EXTRAS

Stuff that doesn't fit anywhere else...

- RESIDENT EVIL 4: CANNED VERSION

PS2 ON THE DVD

PSP ON DVD

It's here! PSP finally arrives in the UK and, in order to get you up and running with movies on Memory Stick as fast as possible, we've included a batch of movies in a special folder on your DVD.

Simply insert the disc into your computer (you do have a DVD-ROM drive on your computer don't you?) and 'Open' the disc. You should see a folder on there called 'PSM2 PSP STUFF'. We recommend that you drag this folder to your desktop, thus copying it there.

Open this folder and you'll find a folder called 'Movie Files' (and one called 'PSM2 Reviews To Go' – more on that to the right). Open this folder and you'll find folders for loads of PSP games. Inside each of these is a PSP movie ready to be played on PSP.

Connect your PSP to your PC and make a folder called MP_ROOT next to your PSP folder. Make a folder called 100MNV01 inside this. Now copy these movie files (all called M4V... etc...) into this folder. Now just eject, disconnect, then click and play from your PSP's Video menu to view.

BATTLEFRONT 2

BOUNTY HOUNDS

PSP

The latest footage from the best new PSP games

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT 2

- METAL GEAR ACID 2
- UNTOLD LEGENDS 2
- TALES OF LEGENDIA
- BOUNTY HOUNDS
- MORE!

PSM2 REVIEWS TO GO

■ Want the ultimate source of all PS2 knowledge in your pocket? Then load up your PSP with Reviews To Go!

Simply insert your DVD into your computer (as described above) and open the 'PSM2 Reviews To Go' folder. Then do as it says – copy the files inside the next folder into you PSP's Photo folder – you'll need 4.6Mb free. No 'Photo' folder? Then your stick needs formatting. On the main menu head left to 'Settings', down to 'System Settings' and then press q. Now go down to 'Format Memory Stick' and press ⊗. Hit ⊗ again and your stick'll be wiped and a set of folders created on board, including the 'Photo' one you need for our reviews to go.

Drag the two 'Reviews To Go' files into this 'Photos' folder. Now eject your PSP and go to your Photos menu. You should see two files. One contains all our PS2 scores, one all our PSP scores. Select the one you want in order to view it.

Got a long thin strip on your screen rather than a massive all-conquering database of every game ever reviewed? Then press ⊗ to bring up the options. Choose 'View' and click it to switch to widescreen. The full Reviews To Go will appear. Use the stick to scroll.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH: "SNAKE COULD START ADVERTISING STAIR LIFTS"

Letters

THE LOUDEST VOICES IN THE PS2 UNIVERSE

► EMAIL: psm2@futurenet.co.uk – subject line 'Letters'

► WRITE TO: Letters, PSM2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW

PSM2 WINNER!

Every issue, the writer of the Star Letter gets our eternal thanks... Oh, PLUS a red hot package of PS2 goodies fresh from the PSM2 booty chest. So entertain us and your fellow readers. Let the prattle commence!

LET'S ALL THINK POSITIVELY "OPEN YOUR MINDS AND LOOK AT THE GAMES!"

► **Dear PSM2,**

After reading the letters featured in PSM2#69, I was in quite a bit of shock. How can people say games such as *Burnout Revenge*, *Resident Evil 4* and *Pro Evolution Soccer 5* are crap?! What would they rather be playing? "Ooh, let's have a good old game of *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*!" Gimme a break. *PES5* is the greatest game of all time – bar *GTA: SA* – and people still wanna complain about that too! I've only rented *Resi 4*, but it made a damn good impression on me for the two days I had it, and I'll be rushing out to get it when my next pay packet comes through. I got *PES5* the day it hit the shelves and, yes, it was a bit frustrating at first, I'll admit that, but I stuck at it and now am enjoying it even more then *PES4*. And finally, if you ask me *Burnout Revenge* is much better then *Burnout 3* – it's just that the jump from *2* to *3* was more pronounced than that from *3* to *Revenge*, so some people don't appreciate it as much. Come on, you're racing big shiny cars at ridiculous speeds, and you can wreck everything in your path a long the way. Open your eyes and look at the games you're playing, people – they don't get much better then this! (Untill PS3 comes out, anyway.)

Steve Grace, Enfield

Ah – a chiming note of positivity for once. We agree with you, Steve – people really are moaning too much about games at the moment when, in fact, they've hardly ever had it so good. Take a look at our 2005 In Review feature and see just how good the last 12 months have actually been for PS2. *God Of War*. *PES5*. *Resi 4*. *Total Overdose*. Great games all. Sure, for every *Burnout* there's three *Bulletproofs*, but you've still been pretty spoilt. So pleased are we at beginning Letters this month on such a positive note, we're going to attempt to get through the next three pages without even one person voicing a negative opinion. Let's go!

RED CARD

► **Dear PSM2,**

Pro Evo 5? Impossible to score, the late whistles are annoying, shots are TOO erratic, AI players don't make runs, the players turn slowly... I can't stand it.

James Ketterer, Essex

Damn. Fallen at the first hurdle...

HAPPY DAYS

► **Dear PSM2,**

Yo guys, I'm here to talk to you about my most recent buys.

1) *Fahrenheit*. This game is superb. I enjoyed every moment but I want to tell you guys about a bit near the ending. OK, when they're underground and Lucas goes off to bed, that girl follows him, then instantly we see two polygonic figures 'exchanging fluids'. And we thought the Hot Coffee mod was bad.

2) *Resi 4*. as you wrote in PSM2#68, it's PS2's second best game ever. Brilliant!

3) I bought this thinking 'maybe', 'maybe not'. Yes it's *From Russia With Love*. I completed it in two days, but it was good while it lasted. I loved the fact you could 'see' Bond in third-person rather than first-person, and you could hide behind walls (*Splinter Cell*), go up to an enemy and hit them (*God Of War*) and you can change costumes (*Resi 4* and *Outbreak*).

Andrew Murray, Belfast

Ah, good. Someone else who's happy with their lot. Can we have more positive letters? We like them.

GOIN' POSTAL

You know the shiver you get down your spine when you hear an unexpected creak in the middle of the night? That's nowhere near as scary as the people in Goin' Postal. Brrrr.

CALL THE CSA
I bitch-slapped the assistant! I'm 32 with seven kids.
David Stark, Grantham
What an excellent role model you must be.

NOT LIKELY
I was more than surprised seeing Henman reach a

BOARD STUPID: *SSX On Tour*. It's not what we'd hoped for, to be honest.

SPEAK TO THE TEAM DECEMBER 22ND

01225 788157

YES, now YOU can SPEAK to PSM2! Call the Hotline and leave us a message at any time, day or night! Alternatively, call us LIVE between 2pm and 5pm on Thursday December 22nd, when we'll be answering the phone in person! And it ain't no '60p per second' porno line either! Bargain!

"ROCKSTAR SHOULD BE LIKE CAPCOM"

CAPCOM OFF IT

► **Dear PSM2,**

I'm very surprised at the number of games involving 'the hood' and stuff. OK, *GTA* is great, but more games should be like *Devil May Cry 3* – that's a classic. Please talk to Rockstar and tell them to be more like Capcom.

Nathan Bayfield, Cambridge

Oh, OK. [ring, ring]. "Hello, is that Mr Rockstar? Good. Could you try being a bit more like Capcom in future? Yeah, we know you're doing fine as you are, but that's what the kids want. You will? Great!" Sorted. Up next from Rockstar: *GTA Beat Down Fighter Hyper Turbo Ex 3*. Can't wait.

PSYCHO KILLER

► **Dear PSM2,**

If I see one more picture of Dante in the letters pages, I swear I will kill someone!

James Hughes, Blackpool

Laura DM hasn't actually written to us this month. She's probably too busy having disturbing fantasies about Dante to bother with the likes of us any more. Sob.

TOUR DE FARCE

► **Dear PSM2,**

What the hell has happened to *SSX*? I rushed out and bought *On Tour*. (before I saw your proper review) Got home all excited and loaded it up.

Hmm. Cheesy drawings that looked like they've been drawn by a psychotic 10-year-old that's found his mum's happy pills. OK. I can live with that, but I'm 39 and it's a bit off putting. Still,the game graphics look good,the physics are fine... but where's the soul?

SSX3 had me staying up all night trying to reach that elusive shortcut,fingers aching from mashing the buttons trying to pull off the huge tricks, eyes bleeding from concentrating on that great 30 minute run down the mountain.

SSX On Tour is just irritating. Several jumps end up with me stuck in a tree (which I cannot miss,no matter how hard I try). That cable car you mentioned got me every time. When I finally managed to miss it, I hit the beams in the roof. And that's on the main route. Every time I tried to take what I thought was a short-cut (they are incredibly hard to find) I either reached the edge of the game and it wouldn't let me go further, or there were so many trees I just bounced all the way down.

Boo, London

It's sad, isn't it? *SSX On Tour* is light years behind the likes of *SSX3* and *Tricky*. It really is a shame, but it's just a sign of what we've come to expect from *SSX* that we're as disappointed as we are by what's still actually a very good game indeed. Maybe next time will see a return to form.

PSP – DEAD?

► **Dear PSM2**

I bought a PSP on launch night and love it to pieces. But last month, you got concerned about the future for PSP, that almost every game is a port, that the portable's already spent, the lack of buttons, blah blah blah. Relax. We're talking about a portable console here. We can put on our music, movies, pictures, surf the web, all while carrying it around anywhere. And if developers got wise, let us play Wi-Fi mode on all their different games.

Stop worrying about PSP's future. Developers will make games for it. Publishers will publish them. The best is yet to come.

Rich, email

Well, we're not concerned PSP will die. We know people will make games, but whether they're the right games is another matter. More games like *Lumines* or *Loco Roco*. Less games like *Harry Potter*. That's what we need.

PSP AND EASY: **It's PSP. It's great! The games aren't much cop, mind, but give it time.**

Wimbledon final.
Sean O'Driscoll, London
And you hadn't entered a parallel universe? Wimbledon final indeed...

BENSON OF GOD
What is a Benson?
Rob Forrest, email
A Benson is a term of great affection. Yes. That's what it is.

SAME AS IT EVER WAS
Pro Evo 5 and *Pro Evo 4* look the same.
Joseph Sheppard, email
So do Nathan and Carlito from WWE. But they're not. Well, that's what Nate says.

YOUTH CLUB
Come on, guys, Andy's young!
Nathan, Wales
That's an illusion. He was actually born in a ditch in the Iron Age. Oil Of Ulay's a remarkable thing.

LETTERS PRAY
Who actually answers all the letters?
Andrew Gallivan, email
We employ a very talented chimp. Good, isn't he?

CAKING IT
I love games more than fat kids love cake.
Anthony Myers, email
But fat kids really love cake.

HELP!
I really need some help with this.
Eric Turner, email
We think a doctor's your best bet.

Letters

THE LOUDEST VOICES IN THE PS2 UNIVERSE

SIMPLY THE BEST: It's *Resi 4*. It's the game of the year. And everybody's happy. Hurrah!.

JESUS LOVES US

► **Dear PSM2**

My name is Suraju Bakare, I'm from Nigeria. The purpose of this message to you is that I want your help. Please if you can do this thing for me your company may not ruin in JESUS'S name, Amen. Please, I need one of your games. If you can give, GOD will bless your company. Please, please do this favour for me, please. GOD will provide what you need for your company in JESUS'S name. AMEN.

Suraju Bakere, Nigeria

Gosh. Aren't Nigerian email scamsters supposed to offer you stuff, not ask for things for themselves? Still, if sending you a game means Jesus will see his way clear to not ruining our company, so be it. Actually, no, we'd quite like to meet Jesus. Forget it, then.

RESI PHWOAR

► **Dear PSM2**

After reading your review of *Resi 4*, I bought the game. To tell the truth, this is the first horror game I've ever bought and the first *Resi* I've ever played – I usually find them a bit dull... oh, OK, I find them too scary so I stick to action games. But I'm hooked. I recommend it to every PS2 owner.

Amir Bashir, Gillingham

Resi 4 has converted a few people to the series. Dave always turned his nose up at it before this new game, for instance. Clearly, *Resi 4* is a game that unites all. Except that bloke last month who said he hated it. Ahem.

WRITE TO PSM2 WITH: LETTERS FOR RON K NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS 2005 – HOW WAS IT FOR YOU? STUPID JOKES

SNAKE'S (ONLY JUST) ALIVE

► **Dear PSM2**

Now Snake's an OAP will he take ages forensically examining identical packets of cheese at Asda? Will he zip across the war zone in one of those motorbility buggies? Snake could start advertising stair lifts and those baths that are easy to get into.

Michael Veal, email

The future that awaits us all. [Shudder]

YOUR PLAYSTATION 3 QUESTIONS ANSWERED!

WITH RON KUTARAGI

(the less famous, younger brother of President and CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment Ken Kutaragi).

NO SECOND-HAND GAMES? PAH

► **Dear PSM2,**

I've just heard that you won't be able to use a PS3 disc on more than one machine – EVER! The disk will have a code or somthing in it that will stop people from sharing games between them!

If this goes ahead then Sony will have shitted up major. A huge part of console gaming is going round to a mate's house and kicking the shit out of him in *Mortal Kombat* or lapping him several times on *GT4*.

Then there is the Used Section in your local games shop where you go and pick up great games for cheap prices, but you wont be able to do that with PS3 if this plan goes ahead. I live on bargain bins! Sony, get your act together!

Sam Holden, email

"Mom and Dad say to me 'Why can't you be more like your brother, Ken? Why can't you be President and CEO of a large multi-national corporation?' Well look at me now! Does *Ken* have a column in PSM2? Does *KEN* get asked questions about PS3?... Hmm? No! Ken does not! Only play PS3 discs on one PS3? That's crazy! I'll just... [sound of a mobile phone being used] uh huh... yup... No, this is definitely rubbish. Ken... I mean 'I' think that you'll deffo be able to use a disc on more than one machine. After all, how will the disc know it's been used in a machine? Ha! *How*? See? YOU DON'T KNOW!"

NURB YOUR ENTHUSIASM

► **Dear PSM2,**

Right, I have two questions about PS3. My first question is about NURBs, this amazing replacement for polygons, which I think PSP uses. Anyway, these are supposed to be a hundred times better than polygons by saving processing power or something like that, but when I read about PS3, it still talks about polygons. Why doesn't PS3 use NURBs?

My next question is about *Half-Life 2*. I vaguely recall reading in your mag ages ago that *Half-Life 2* was announced for PS3, but when it came to E3 and all the games were announced, there wasn't as much as a whisper of it. Will it still be released on PS3? Thanks,

Chris Nicholls, Brighton

"Yes, The NURBS are cool. I've got all their CDs. *Half Life 2*. It's out now... [muffled voices] *What's that Ken?... Half-Life 2* will only be out on Xbox unfortunately. SEE? I KNEW THAT! I'M NOT STUPID!"

SCREEN DREAM

► **Dear PSM2,**

Am I the only one who is feeling a bit sad at the impending arrival of PlayStation 3? At the moment I've a PS2 with the fantastic Joytech screen attached. This little screen is the best £100 I've ever spent! Now I can play *Killzone* whilst Her Who Must Be Obeyed watches her soaps without friction. But what's going to happen when the new machine arrives? Will developers stop work on PS2 titles? That portability that I've come to love will disappear. The last six months since getting my combo have been the best gaming I've ever had!

Phil Williams, aged 44 3/4, email

"Ken suggests, I mean *I suggest, I SUGGEST* checking out our Location Free TV feature on page 24. That should sort you out. Happy now? See? I'm right! RIGHT!"

TEXT PSM2

Yes! Now you can text your questions and letters to PSM2. No more fiddling with 'paper' and 'pens'. When you want answers, our mobile portal is wide open and waiting. Here's how.

DO THIS NOW! WE'RE WAITING!

It really couldn't be simpler. In the words of George Michael 'We Want Your Texts'... Or something. We've set up not one, but three different lines upon which to reach us. Look. Down there.

TEXT THE TEAM!

First up we want you to ask us a question. Anything! We'll feature your questions and answers in the mag and – we swear by almighty Lorne Lanning himself – that we'll do our best to text you back a reply as soon as poss. The best bit? You only pay for the text once we reply. (Answers to your PlayStation questions will cost you 25p plus your normal TXTing charge).

Start your text PSM2 then a space, then your question. Text the lot to 87103. We'll reply. Honest!

MAKE US LAUGH!

Taken a photo of anything decent recently? Fancy sharing it with the readership of PSM2? We want to see your pictures. Best picture each month wins a booty of games. Pics cost 50p, plus your usual TXTing charge. Just try and keep them vaguely game related eh? No violence or porn thanks. Second thoughts... if you have any hot certified-over-18 female friends or relations that we can hook Andy up with... Or men, come to think of it...

Start your text PSM2PICS then a space, then your message. Enclose you pic and text the lot to 07921 889345. Best pic wins.

VOTE FOR GAMES!

What games do you want to see in PSM2? Which are you most looking forward to? Text us and we'll compile your Most Wanted chart each month. What's more, one entry each month will win the game they vote for. Texts cost 25p plus your usual TXTing charge.

Start your text PSM2VOTE then a space, then the name of the game you want to 87103. Be lucky!

16+
namco
SO MANY OPPONENTS.
SO LITTLE TIME.
PlayStation.2
fireitUp
PREPARE TO DO BATTLE. Over 18 unique warriors including newcomers, Zasalamel, Setsuka and Tira, plus veteran fighters Voldo, Raphael and Taki await your pleasure. Or TAKE ON THE BEST by creating your own original fighter, friend or foe in your search for the legendary swords of AWESOME POWER, fighting your way through MORE BATTLE MODES than ever before, including Chronicles of the Sword mode, Tales of Souls mode and Soul Arena mode
PlayStation.2
www.playstationfireitup.co.uk/soulcalibur3

Accelerator

SCANDALOUS GOSSIP, INSIDER DIRT, ZERO BULLSHIT

WELCOME TO 2006!

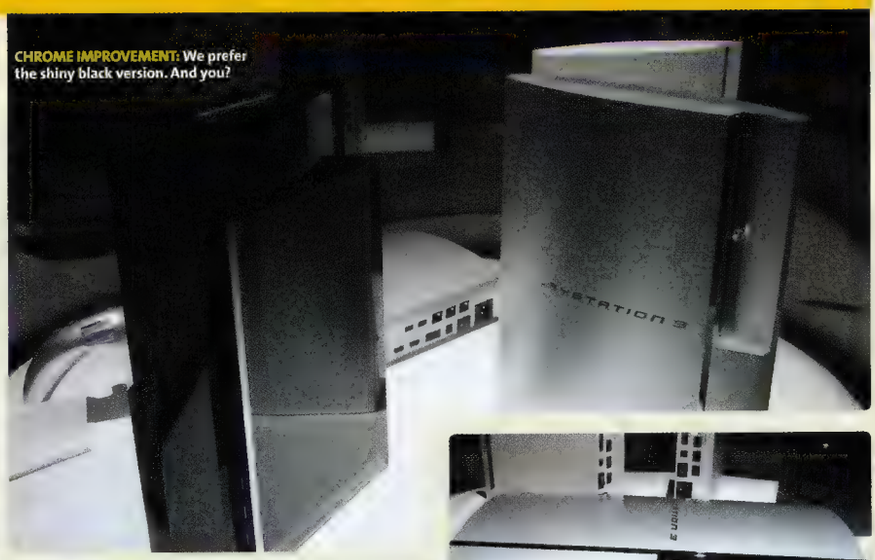
MGS4, PS3, a new *GTA* on PSP... 2006 will be the year when the next-gen future becomes glorious reality. Take a look at this...

JANUARY
PLAYABLE PS3?!

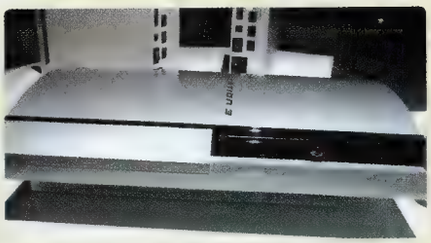
GENRE:
FINGER CROSSING

PSM GAMES OF 2006

Sony will have a strong presence at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, and we're being told to expect new PS3 information, including confirmation of the Blu-Ray storage format. A playable machine *might* be a stretch too far – it'll probably debut in Japan first (in a special event in February, echoing the schedule of PS2) – but SCEA (Sony America) will probably unveil some new US-developed PS3 games (*God of War: Next Gen*? Please?), plus maybe some concrete release date and pricing information.



CHROME IMPROVEMENT: We prefer the shiny black version. And you?



LOOK OUT FOR: *Medal of Honor PS3, Socom: Next Gen, Jak: Next Gen, Ratchet and Clank: Next Gen, Sly: Next Gen.*

IN THE SHOPS: *Samurai Showdown 5, World Poker Tour, We Love Katamari, Armoured Core: Nexus*

ANTICIPATION **99%**

FEBRUARY
DRIVER: PARALLEL LINES

GENRE:
DRIVING

PSM GAMES OF 2006

OK, so the time-travelling (see page 16) is only slightly less gimmicky than the '3' in *Driv3r*, but at least they've culled the awful third-person bits and liberated the mission structure, so you no longer fail missions instantly if you slip 3mm behind the pursuit car.

Also look out for the incredible *Shadow Of The Colossus* (91%, PSM2#69), and – if you missed it first time out – pick up its re-released half-prequel *Ico* for a super bargain £19.99 (original copies were trading on ebay for £80 only a few months ago – it's that good).

IN THE SHOPS: *PES Management, Bully, Devil Kings, TOCA Race Driver 3, Pac Man World 3*

ANTICIPATION **80%**

MARCH
ONIMUSHA: DAWN OF DREAMS

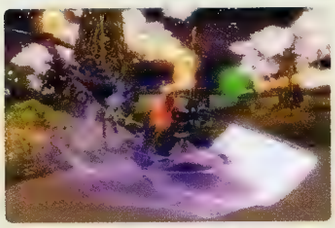
GENRE:
ACTION/ADVENTURE

PSM GAMES OF 2006

Dawn of Dreams executive producer Keiji Inafune, in an attempt to net the attention of what he's calling "semi-hardcore gamers," has focused squarely on depth of gameplay in the new *Onimusha*. New features like being able to switch characters on the fly and upgrade your party typify this change of direction, but will the series' charm be lost as a result? Time will tell... in, er, March. Should be a busy month for reviews, too...

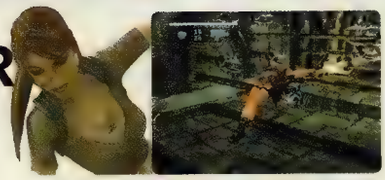
LOOK OUT FOR: *24: The Game, Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers*

ANTICIPATION **79%**



ISSEN THE LOVELY: The combo-style Issen attacks are more spectacular.

APRIL
TOMB RAIDER LEGEND



GENRE:
ACTION/ADVENTURE

PSM GAMES OF 2006

Expect classic puzzles with a range of Matrix-style combat moves (love that slide and shoot attack), but Lara's also got a grappling hook to swing from objects, move scenery and snag bad guys. Complex graphic technology focuses *all* of PS2's memory and processing power into a single event – to allow vast and detailed vistas (wait 'til you see the waterfall) twinned to intense claustrophobic combat, without intrusive load times.

IN THE SHOPS: *Splinter Cell 4, 25 to Life, Phantasy Star Universe, Fifa Street 2.*

LOOK OUT FOR: Hot E3 rumours and leaked images of 'secret' PS3 games.

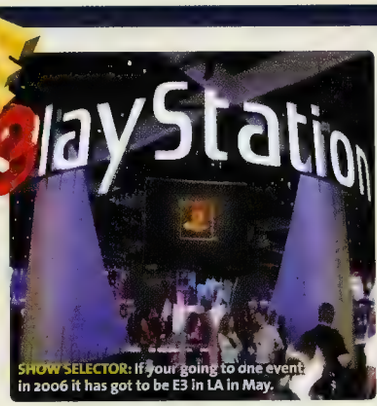
ANTICIPATION **94%**

MAY
E3 IN LA

GENRE:
WORLD'S BIGGEST GAMES SHOW

PSM GAMES OF 2006

Expect playable PS3, new in-game *MGS4* footage – if not a surprise hands-on demo – and a raft of next-gen announcements. We're betting the farm (our smaller one) on *GTA: Next Gen*, possibly set in Europe. We'll also see PS3 versions of *PES, FIFA, Need for Speed, Tony Hawk, Prince of Persia*, plus the latest on Free Radical's Ubisoft collaboration, *Killzone, Motor Storm* and *Devil May Cry 4*.



SHOW SELECTOR: If your going to one event in 2006 it has got to be E3 in LA in May.

IN THE SHOPS: *Siren 2, Sonic Riders, Okami, Metal Gear Subsistence.*

LOOK OUT FOR: E3. That's it. Oh, and we'll kill for playable *Resi 5*.

ANTICIPATION **100%**

MUZZLE ME THIS: Impressed? Wait until you're holding the pad.

JUNE
BLACK

GENRE:
FIRST PERSON SHOOTER

Let's face it, they've got no idea what the plot's going to be – all the stuff they told us years ago about special ops with dashes of 24 has been hushed up, perhaps at the behest of EA's pleb-fearing marketing synergy team – but the game's undeniably incredible, with true scenery deformation, thundering particle explosions and expressive weaponry.

LOOK OUT FOR: The Spider Man 3 movie with new villain Sandman.

IN THE SHOPS: A striking new range of leather biknis, and Spider Man 3.

ANTICIPATION 95%

JULY
SILENT HILL: THE MOVIE

GENRE:
ACTION/ADVENTURE/PUZZLER

We love *Silent Hill* and we were worried they'd destroy the memory of our favourite horror series with sub-standard Hollywood tripe. But, well, it looks quite good. They've captured the feel of the town perfectly, and the fog-drenched street sign is as powerful an image as it ever was on PS2. We have high hopes for this. Let's hope they're not ill-founded.

IN THE SHOPS: Spider-Man 3 hits the cinemas, so expect an accompanying game.

ANTICIPATION 75%

AUGUST
WINNING ELEVEN 10

GENRE:
FOOTIE

Our first glimpse of Japanese *PES6* – and probably the last of the series on PS2. Expect the usual roster updates, and some offical kit surprises – think popular national teams – plus more advanced online features and a genuine Master League overhaul. Producer Seabass wants to do a 'persistent' ML transfer market on PS3 – so only one Rooney – and this could be the first step.

KITS ALRIGHT: This 'hacked' save file from pesfan.com might point to the series' future.

LOOK OUT FOR: More Formula One games, *Tony Hawk's Urban Something-or-other.*

IN THE SHOPS: New Eidos' *Conflict* game, Next Gen *Burnout.*

ANTICIPATION 98%

OCTOBER
GRAND THEFT AUTO: NEW PSP GAME

GENRE:
FREE-ROAMING CRIME

Liberty City's gone, and San Andreas is too ambitious, so we're betting that Rockstar's next *GTA* PSP game – as recently confirmed in a Take Two shareholder conference call – will be *Vice City*, tweaked in a similar fashion to *Liberty City Stories*. It might, *might* be *GTA: London*, but that seems too big a project given the turnaround time since *Liberty City Stories* came out.

IN THE SHOPS: FIFA 07, PES6. The battle continues.

ANTICIPATION 100%

SEPTEMBER
SCARFACE

GENRE:
ACTION/ADVENTURE/PUZZLER

Wondering what happened to *Scarface*? Well it's back here. In what could turn out to be the smartest move of the year this GTA-alike has been treated to six months extra polish and a clean field upon which to clean up.

LOOK OUT FOR: First notice of the PS3 release line-up for the UK. (ie, minus Shogi games).

IN THE SHOPS: New *Need for Speed*. Though we can only guess at how they'll pitch it.

ANTICIPATION 75%

NOVEMBER
FINAL FANTASY XII (ENGLISH VERSION)

GENRE:
RPG

It has been in development for years and Square Enix are to be commended for not jumping this huge project over to PS3. Yes, there is something to look forward to on PS2 in late 2006, and it's this, sprawling, typically epic FF episode. Set in Ivalice you play Vaan who courts a princess Dalmaska and takes part in the biggest, most bad-guy packed battles ever seen in a *Fantasy*. Awesome.

LOOK OUT FOR: An *Iron Man* licence from comic-book lovers Activision.

IN THE SHOPS: Expect a sequel to wild-west favourite *Gun*, and... a new *Harry Potter*! Yay!

ANTICIPATION 80%

DECEMBER
PS3 LAUNCHES IN UK!

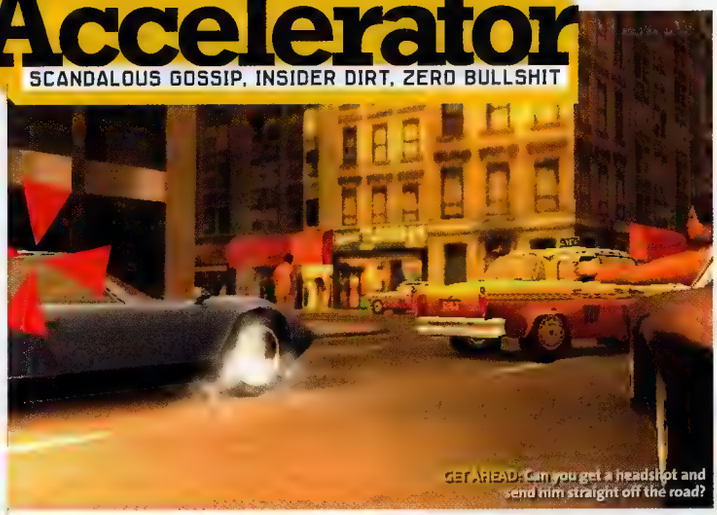
GENRE:
HARDWARE

You've got to be optomisitic, haven't you? And we'll bet Andy's sweet balls that PlayStation 3 will make on-sale in the UK before 2006 is out. It'll just scrape in end of December, and you'll have to pre-order in September, but it WILL be here. How much? Get used to £399. Sounds like loads but it'll be worth it.

LOOK OUT FOR: A huge raft of new original PS3 games. And lots of old ones from EA.

IN THE SHOPS: Expect the bargain buckets to be groaning with PS2 games. PS3 rules.

ANTICIPATION 100%


GET AHEAD: Can you get a headshot and send him straight off the road?

POLICE RELEASE ME: The cops can be troublesome.

Developer: Reflections ■ Publisher: Atari ■ ETA: Early 2006

DRIVER: PARALLEL LINES

Forget those rubbish third-person bits – the new *Driver*'s all about high speed chases and time travel. No, really...

As we had the pleasure of revealing last month, the follow-up to *Driver 3* is set to feature a Hollywood handling model that doesn't – this time – remind us of the bit in The Love Bug where Herbie splits in half and his arse starts driving itself. Gone is the misguided love of realism and demanding Director mode that blew out the previous game's tyres. Not that you can't still thrust the action into stylish slo-mo as you smash through donut stalls and powerslide past the cops, but it's now a convenient twin shoulder button cutaway rather than a dedicated mode. It's being able to perform said manoeuvres in the first place, however, that's the important bit.

With the amount of traffic lining each stylised New York street determining the difficulty level, it's a relief to find weaving in-between both cars and scenery to be both entirely possible and rewardingly challenging. The game's wealth of primary and optional missions serves up some novel twists and turns, highlights being a drugged-up chase complete with nauseating POV blur, and a "scare-o-meter" mission in which the objective is to brown your crooked passenger's pants with truly demented driving.

Many of these challenges, however, simply won't be possible in a vanilla vehicle, which is where the auto-yard plays its part. Every vehicle – car, bike or HGV – can be upgraded with new engines, bodywork, nitrous and performance parts. Build up enough horsepower and, it's said, you'll be catching up with your own rockets. Which brings us to weapons – something that, in this case, we know you're gonna love.

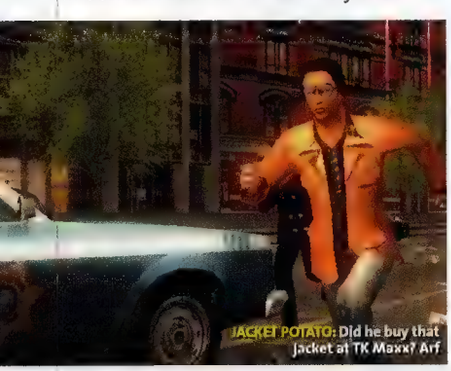
> **"BROWN YOUR CROOKED PASSENGER'S PANTS WITH DEMENTED DRIVING"**

LOOKING GOOD

Main character TK's charismatic stride, poses and available arsenal means that you not only *look* the bomb when you exit your vehicle (something you'll only normally do in order to steal another) but *have* the bombs as well. On-foot shooting – one of the last game's many Achilles heels – has transformed in *Parallel Lines*. Its convincing physics and vibrant special effects make it better here than in *GTA*, *True Crime* or any of their clones, simple and efficient in its lock-on system and incendiary in its effect.

With such basics repaired and replaced, Reflections has staff dedicated solely to packing the game with sub-missions and minigames to keep players hooked for days. Just a few minutes with this latest model, however, will have you feeling at home behind the wheel.

PSM RECKONS *Having piled itself into such a brick wall last time,* Driver *has reversed quite some distance before setting off again (back to the spirit of the first game, in fact). From what we've seen so far, this is the best decision Reflections could have made: the Hollywood is back and the mess of realism and bugs that was* Driv3r *can be forgotten. There are still a few issues to sort out, but* Parallel Lines *has got what it takes to bring true crime back to the streets of New York.*


JACKET POTATO: Did he buy that jacket at TK Maxx? Arf

AS YOU BIKE IT: The bikes are looking promisingly nippy and quick right now.

FEAST FOR THE EYES: It certainly looks pretty nice. Hopefully, it'll be less jerky than last time round.

PARALLEL TIMES

A lengthy hands-on session means that we've experienced not only a wide range of *Parallel Lines*' missions, but both of its vibes as well. That's right – the game covers two eras rather than one. The reason for the game starting in the 70's and resurfacing in modern times (which we won't spoil) is fantastic, for sure: a fittingly Tarantino-esque plot twist that turns the game on its head. New York then and New York now are two very different places, and the new *Driver* does a great job in capturing their different vehicles, people and places.

1990s'

I WANNA BE A PART OF IT: A hard-fought police chase takes place on the mean streets of modern-day New York.

1970s'

SIGN OF THE TIMES: And this is New York in the 70's, when all was a bit more relaxed. Although not that much.

STOP PRESS

■ Developer: Ubisoft ■ Publisher: Ubisoft ■ ETA: Spring

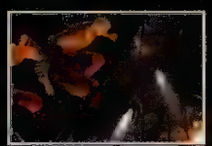
THE GOGGLES ARE BACK!

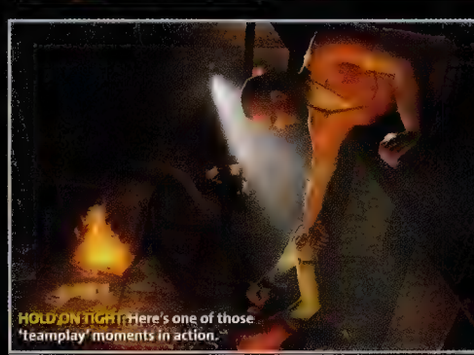
He might start in prison but Splinter Cell 4's Fisher is getting the green light after all.

This month, we had a chat with the senior producer of *Splinter Cell 4*, Mathieu Ferland, who let slip that, contrary to what the early screenshots of a bald Sam Fisher in prison suggest, that our second favourite stealth agent *will* don the magic three-bulb hat once again. But until then, the gruff-voiced operative has gone off the rails somewhat and landed himself in jail for 36 counts of armed robbery. His daughter has been killed, you see – you know, the one he was always arguing with in the first game – and he's quit Third Echelon as a result, gone rogue and went mental. "We want to raise the bar and provide a realistic experience" muses Mathieu. "We want the game to be revolutionary." He also explains that the much-improved graphics engine will feature "impressive ice effects" – could Sam be making his way to the frozen Antarctic to seek revenge for his murdered daughter? When pushed about whether or not Sam will get his iconic green goggles back, Mathieu slyly tells us "I guess he'll find a way to get them back sooner or later," probably sniggering to himself all the while. The *tease*.

PSM RECKONS *The prison angle certainly is interesting. Fisher must team up with a friendly inmate and make his escape, which should incorporate stealth and teamplay elements. But the revelation that the goggles are making a return implies that this is simply a prologue to more familiar territory. Still, it all sounds very interesting indeed.*

PRINCE OF JAILS: The game starts with Sam languishing unfairly in jail.

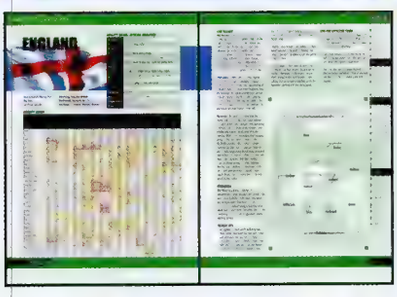




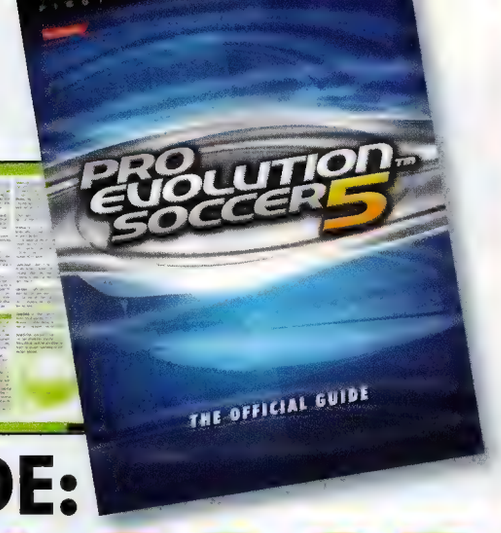
HOLD ON TIGHT: Here's one of those 'teamplay' moments in action.

Accelerator

SCANDALOUS GOSSIP, INSIDER DIRT, ZERO BULLSHIT



SHAKE YOUR TACTICS: The formational advice is in-depth and insightful.



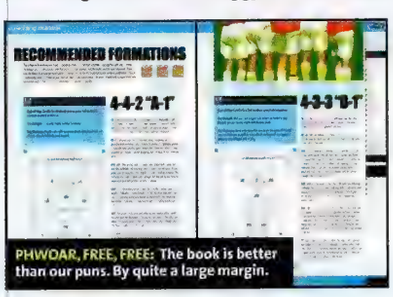
PES5 OFFICIAL GUIDE: OFFICIALLY GOOD

Notice a sexy colour book fall out of the packaging? That's a sample of the excellent Official PES5 guide. Unless Andy's mislaid his 'art' pamphlets...

It's not every day we put our name to a giant book of statistics, but Piggyback's Official *Pro Evolution Soccer 5* Guide has honestly changed the way we view the beautiful game.

Yes, we've got a giant full colour sample with this issue, and *of course* we'd like to say nice things about it, but Piggyback's Official *PES5* guide speaks for itself. With 222 pages of stylish, waffle-free tips and information, the book answers such pressing questions as: 1) What do the player morale/condition arrows actually do? (Well, the red one puts +12% on a player's Attack rating, but only +9% on Dribble Accuracy... see the book for more.) 2) How do player stats work? (*PES5* uses an exponential stat curve from 95-99, so players with a 97 Speed rating are noticeably faster than a 94) and 3) What's the best formation for each team? (the book explains each team's best tactics, plus hints for playing against them). In short, it's a must-read for hardcore *PES* fans.

We should probably stop plugging it, but with inside information from the developers, including seven pages of promising Master League players – blowing the transfer market wide open – it's hard to stop. No, actually, that's it, but we're honestly proud to associate ourselves with this book, available <adopts cheesiest voiceman drawl> from all good game shops for the reasonable sum of £10.99.

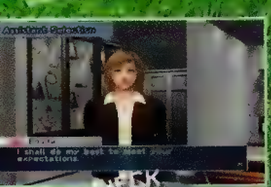


PHWOAR, FREE, FREE: The book is better than our puns. By quite a large margin.

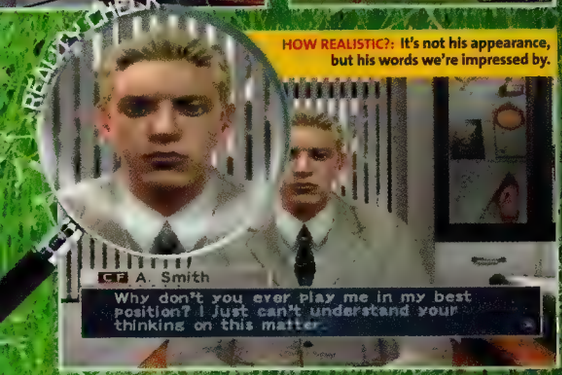
Win! Champions League final tickets

Our chums at Piggyback are giving you the chance to win Champion's League Final tickets in their 'Beautiful Goal' competition! Got a cracker saved to memory card? Now head to http://www.piggyback.interactivecorp.com/en/pes5/ for full details. Basically, it's a goal competition. Post your goal on line, best goal bags the tickets. Result.

PSM RECKONS *As you may have guessed, we honestly think this book is brilliant, the full-size version would look the bomb on any coffee-table and it has content for beginner players right up to experts. Trust us. This is sheer, fact packed, quality, which has genuinely changed the way we look at* PES5. *And if the Official* Barry Hatter *tips book thinks it's getting such an easy ride next month, we welcome the call.*



REALITY CHECK



HOW REALISTIC?: It's not his appearance, but his words we're impressed by.

■ Developer: Konami ■ Publisher: Konami ■ ETA: Early 2006

PES MANAGEMENT: IS IT ANY GOOD?

We're not sure – but here's our impressions and inside info from developer Greyhound. Yes, that's his real name.

The most annoying thing about *PES Management* is that you can't pick up the pad mid-match to help your team. The fact that it looks like *PES* only emphasises the feeling of helplessness when the opposition cruise into a 3-0 lead. In some respects, it's more like real-life – because you honestly know you could do a better job on the pitch. Scrape past the initial frustration, however, and you'll reveal a complex, but potentially rewarding, management system.

"If we let people play it would take even longer and be less fun," argues Producer Greyhound. "But since this is the first edition, in future it may be technically possible if that's what people want. Maybe you could only play the important matches." The game is swathed in statistics, most of which are familiar to *PES* fans, but the menu screens are currently cluttered and slightly baffling. You're never quite sure how to begin tweaking the huge number of training schedules, scouting options, tactics, formations and player commands, so you're left relying on your coaches' advice – which has the counter-effect of removing the skill.

On the bright side, the graphics are superb, and you can call players into your room for a special 'chat' – worth it to see Wayne Rooney in a tie. It's also a great scouting tool for *PES5*'s Master League, with shared players and stats, plus you can swap data between the two games.

PSM RECKONS *Jury's out – we can't really tell how our tactics affect play, are flummoxed by the menus and frustrated we can't pick up the pad. It might just be that we haven't sussed out how everything inter-relates, but the developers need to make the outcomes of your tactical tweaks clearer in the final code. We're currently unsure, but sort-of optimistic... Full review soon.*

PLAY PSM2 ONLINE!

AND WIN PRIZES!

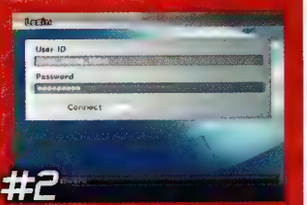
Fancy PES5? Think you've got what it takes to beat PSM2? Get yourself online and find out.

In a move that may backfire – and perhaps lead to the instant end of this column – we're giving you the chance to beat PSM2 at *PES5*. Not that we'll lose, since we're brilliant at *PES5*. *Brilliant*. In fact, we're so confident of victory, we'll give everyone who beats us a game. Unless we get consistently whipped, then it'll probably be rapidly 'upgraded' to a free copy of PSM2. Or *Barry Hatter*.

Anyhow, know the instructions below to get yourself online and play us on Wednesday 21st December, between 12pm-2pm – the day of our office Christmas party (are we really sure we want to do this?). We're getting the excuses in early, see? Don't worry – we'll arrange more sociable times in the New Year. Details below.

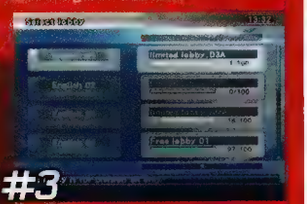
#1

What you need: A copy of *PES5*, PS2 Network Adaptor, active Broadband account and a PS2.



#2

Set up your PES online account (see the game's manual).



#3

Go online on Wednesday 21st December between 12pm-2pm.

#4

We'll set up our own lobby called 'Play PSM2 here!'

#5

If you beat us, email your address, the game's score and your online 'handle' to psm2@futurenet.co.uk. We'll have a keyboard ready for a 'chat' if you're up for it too. Best of luck! (By which we mean that we hope you lose.)

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Battle with various tanks, robots, bikes and other mechanised equipment. You can also customise your chosen equipment.

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PlayStation 2

日本一 SOFTWARE

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SAVE OUR KOJBLOG!

Gah! The world's best, most-depressed, developer wants to give up his online diary. And why is he taking laxatives?

Last month we waxed lyrical about Kojblog, the online diary of *Metal Gear* creator Hideo Kojima, who spends his entire life spouting philosophy, moaning about being depressed and name-checking indie bands who were popular two months ago. This month was no different, with Koj bumping into "a phalanx of uniformed students," revealing his love of Wallace and Gromit (seriously) and listening to the new Depeche Mode album while under the influence of laxatives. Really.

The big news, though, is mixed. On the bright side, Koj has bought a digital camera, and you can follow his digital exploits over there. On the dark side, Koj is thinking of giving up his blog (causing an unnamed team member to drop to his knees like Darth Vadar at the end of Revenge Of The Sith). In the interests of all right thinking people, we're mounting a campaign to keep Kojblog alive, and you can find full details in the 'Cheer up Koj!' box (right). He also, er, occasionally drops hints about *Metal Gear Solid 4*, so there's a proper reason, too.

<Stop press> Koj's latest post reveals he wants to make an iPod that changes colour according to the music you play. Honestly, it's like we were separated at birth.

"KOJ ATTENDED A PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOT CAMP FOR MGS4"

PSM RECKONS *We love Koj. A bit too much, perhaps, but the astonishing honesty of his blog must be applauded – the bit about the laxatives is all true – and proves why his games are always such nuanced genius. Stay tuned for more Koj next month... fingers crossed.*

This is Koj's office. We'll remember that for when we're ~~stalking~~ visting him.

Koj looks sad and eats at Psychological Boot Camp (see 'Highlights')

This is Kenichiro, the bloke who was going to make *MGS4* until Koj stopped him. Perhaps for

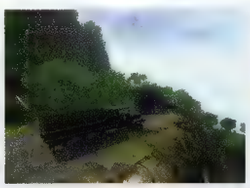
Koj always takes pictures of his food. See, he really is just like us!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM KOJBLOG

- Koj attended a Psychological boot camp for *MGS4*. "I feel as though I have been reborn," he reveals, "People, ideas, places, and objects that seemed to exist without relation to each other have become connected." He wants to include these themes in *MGS4*.
- Koj thinks that PS3 is so powerful, he'll have to change the way he works, perhaps take voice, facial and body data all from the same actor.
- Koj doesn't 'drink' tea, but 'smashes' it. The Japanese, eh?
- Koj reads letters from Kojblog fans. 'Tears filled my eyes,' he says. 'Some of the letters fell to the floor'.
- Koj suffers spastic attacks in his sleep, but he's OK. His docs blame stress.
- He's listened to Bloc Party, New Order, Editors and Depeche Mode.

CHEER UP KOJ!

Help save Kojblog by sending us something that will make him smile – it can be a joke, picture, whatever. But nothing deadly or featuring magical cigarettes. We'll send the best over to Koj and bung you some games. Just email your entry to psm2@futurenet.co.uk, or use our new text service. Text PSM2KOJ <your joke> to 87103 or send pics to PSM2KOJPIC on 07921889346. Texts costs 25p, pics 50p (plus usual text charges).



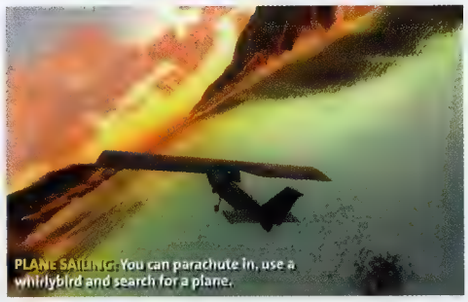
JUST CAUSE

Eidos' *Grand Theft Jungle* pushes PS2 to its limits.

While it's currently little more than a technical demo, Eidos' *Just Cause* might be one of the biggest games of 2006. Literally. The game world spans 1225 square miles of mountains, jungles, cities, beaches and villages, which you're free to explore in a variety of sea, land and air vehicles – like the single seat plane pictured. The free-roaming play will allow you to pit the island's factions against each other, start riots or build alliances, as 'flamboyant' hero Rico Rodriguez – an undercover CIA op – tries to overthrow the corrupt government of San Esperito, who are suspected of stockpiling WMD's. Groan.

PSM RECKONS *Developer's Avalanche have been working on their 'procedural landscape rendering' engine for ten years, which is aimed at providing detailed graphics at both close and distant range – just look at the screens for proof. Quite how this'll work on the five-year-old PS2 remains to be seen, however, but it's always good to see the hardware being stretched. We're quietly optimistic. More on this as we get it...*

BOAT SERIOUSLY: These screens are from a PC prototype, so expect a lower-res PS2 game.



PLANE SAILING: You can parachute in, use a whirlybird and search for a plane.

THE DA VINCI CODE

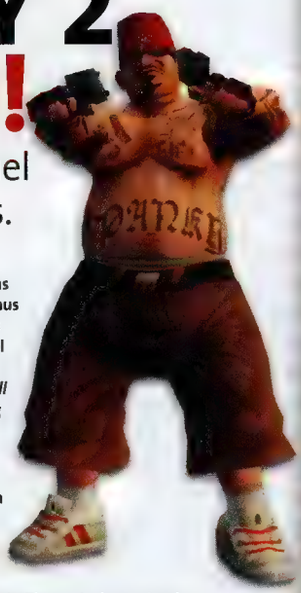
It'll be the biggest game next summer. Fact.

Take Two have nabbed the rights to the Da Vinci Code, based on Dan Brown's novel and the forthcoming film starring Tom Hanks. The good news is that the game's being developed by The Collective, the fellers behind *Mark Ecko's Getting Up*. Expect a third-person action adventure with puzzle sections – a bit like *Fahrenheit*.

PSM RECKONS *Sony insiders are treating this as one of the biggies of 2006, so expect a decent conversion. The book's "An ingenious mixture of paranoid thriller, art history lesson, chase story, religious lecture and anti-clerical screed," according to salon.com, but how this'll translate into a game, we're not sure.*

STATE OF EMERGENCY 2
THIS TIME IT'S GOOD!

OK, so the first game was a load of old parp, but this sequel could actually be good. And no, we haven't lost our minds.



GIB ME A BREAK: This prison break level is super violent, especially with the shotgun.

BRUTAL VIOLENCE!

The first *State Of Emergency* was sold on the back of *GTA3* and thus had some of the most tasteless violence imaginable. The sequel continues this tradition, but unlike its predecessor, it's not *all* about mindless limb-shredding chaos. There's the following for example...

VEHICLES!

Not only can you run around on foot smashing people up, but you can also take charge of a range of vehicles. Among these are armoured cars, tanks, helicopters and speedboats. The controls are simple and arcade-like, which reflects the game as a whole – simple, old-skool fun. Excellent.

GANG WARS!

Like a scaled-down version of PSM2 favourite *Freedom Fighters*, playing as gang lord Spanky <ahem> you can control a group of gang-bangers to help you battle the enemy. You can issue simple commands (wait, attack, cause chaos), reminiscent of *The Warriors*.

ESPIONAGE!

There's now an actual plot backing the action up in *SoE2*, a strand of which reminds us of *Ghost In The Shell* – it's all computer hacking, cyber-terrorists, shock troopers with big shoulder pads and girls in skintight futuristic hose abseiling down the side of buildings.

PSM RECKONS *The tedious riot-based gameplay of the first game has been ditched in favour of something with a lot more substance. The tongue-in-cheek plot, satisfying arcade gameplay and large-scale set-pieces make this one to watch, and more than makes up for the woeful first game. Hurrah for that.*

A 26-YEAR-OLD HETEROSEXUAL MAN* SAYS "BUY KINGDOM HEARTS 2!"

Mulan! Winnie the Poo! Tron! Keira Knightley?! What madness is this?

We'll be honest – we've been finding it hard to get that excited about the new *Kingdom Hearts*. It's been about a thousand years since we first heard that Mickey is clad in a Matrix-style trenchcoat and gets hands-on with the ass kicking.

But then we saw these screenshots. Is... is that Tron?! Yes, it's bloody Tron. Sora, Goofy and Donald don the classic blue suits and enter the glorious neon world of lightcycles and magic frisbees. Then we learned that there's a level based on Pirates Of The Caribbean... with Johnny Depp and Keira Knightley and everything! Could this game get any better? Only if it included a level based on Disney classic Uncle Buck, which, to be fair, probably won't happen.

PSM RECKONS *They've chosen the best Disney films – Mulan, Aladdin, The Little Mermaid and even the cartoon that started it all, Steamboat Willie, which features the gang drawn in a creepy black-and-white 50s style. There are more to be revealed, which only excites us further. All of a sudden,* Final Fantasy XII *doesn't seem that fascinating...*

THIS IS KINGDOM HEARTS?!
Hard to believe, but yes. This pic of peeled Johnny Depp is from the new game. It's not just for kids, see?

* The average age of the PSM2 team

Accelerator extra

Tiny last-minute shots of BIG importance

FRONT MISSION 5

The *Front Mission* series is mostly unknown outside of Japan, but it's massive over there, and rightly so – it's an excellent futuristic strategy game. Here's hoping they release it over here along with the planned PSP version. Start a petition for it.

SAMURAI WARRIORS 2

Koei continue to pump out the large-scale historical war games. The original *Samurai Warriors* was actually one of their best, so the news of a sequel isn't that bad. Just stop with the *Dynasty Warriors*, will you? We've had enough of that now.

GAUNTLET: SEVEN SORROWS

Midway's fantasy-themed action RPG follows the familiar template of titles like *Baldur's Gate* and *Untold Legends* – simple, accessible RPG fun with more emphasis on combat than fiddling with statistics. More on this very soon.

ICO RE-RELEASE

If you missed *Ico* the first time around (which you probably did, because only about seven people bought it), now's your chance to get it for a mere £20 next February. At that price, how can you justify not owning one of PS2's best games? You can't.

ZERO TOLERANCE

In this novel FPS, you're charged with helping a riot-ravaged city's police and fire department to restore order. How? By shooting up criminals. It's an interesting idea, but how will it work in execution? More next month.

Pro Dojo

THE NEXT GENERATION

Each month we give you the chance to show off your gaming genius. Dojo is now simpler than ever to enter, so show us your skills.

CLOSING DATE 18/01/06

DO THIS!

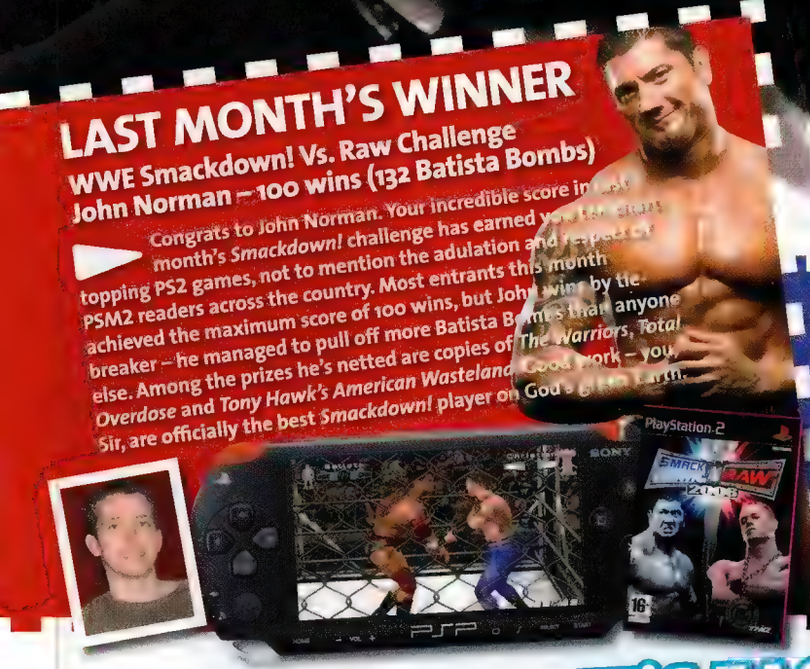
STARWARS BATTLEFRONT 2 EWOK HUNT CHALLENGE

Select 'Instant Action', choose Endor and start 'Hunt' mode. Playing as a Stormtrooper, your task is to kill as many Ewoks as possible in the alloted five minutes. A good technique is to let them bunch together, leaving them open to a devastating thermal detonator attack. Most dead Ewoks wins!

LAST MONTH'S WINNER

WWE Smackdown! Vs. Raw Challenge
John Norman – 100 wins (132 Batista Bombs)

Congrats to John Norman. Your incredible score in [illegible] month's *Smackdown!* challenge has earned you the status topping PS2 games, not to mention the adulation and respect of PSM2 readers across the country. Most entrants this month achieved the maximum score of 100 wins, but John [illegible] by the breaker – he managed to pull off more Batista Bombs than anyone else. Among the prizes he's netted are copies of *The Warriors*, *Total Overdose* and *Tony Hawk's American Wasteland*. Good work – you, Sir, are officially the best *Smackdown!* player on God's [illegible] Earth.



WIN THIS!

A PSP, GRIPSHIFT AND FRANTIX

He or she who wipes out the most Ewoks wins a brand new PSP and copies of both *Gripshift* and *Frantix* (both available in stores right now) to play on it, thanks to our mates at Ubisoft. So get that *Battlefront 2* fired up. Make that PSP yours.

FILL IN THIS FORM!

WHICH CHALLENGE?
BATTLEFRONT 2 CHALLENGE

My score is.....
Name.....
Age.....
Address.....
.....
.....

I enclose...

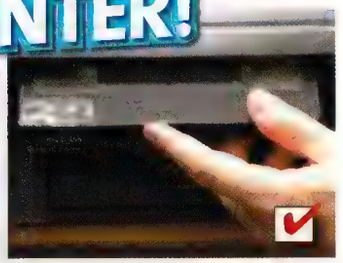
- ☐ A tape (wound to the right place)
- ☐ A photograph (with my name on the back)

PSM2
PRO DOJO
BATTLEFRONT 2 CHALLENGE
FUTURE PUBLISHING
BATH
BA1 2BW

IT'S EASY! HOW TO ENTER!

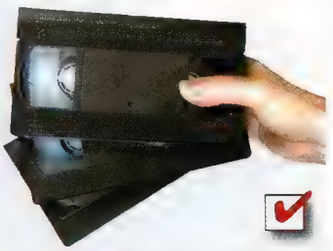
Each month we dish out a challenge and you have to do it as quickly and as brilliantly as possible. The player who beats our challenge by the fattest margin before our closing day wins the booty. Simple. BE WARNED THOUGH, the closing date is a MASSIVELY STRICT January 18th. On that day we'll be picking our winner – make sure your tape is with us for then. For reasons too dull to go into, though, we won't be announcing the results of this particular contest until the issue out on February 9th – in other words, there'll be no winners announced next month. But there'll still be another brand new fiendish challenge for you to get stuck into, so make sure you're tuned to these pages.

Respond to the challenge above and send us your efforts on tape.



Plug your PS2's SCART lead into your video, tune your TV to your video and tape away.

Wind your tape to the right place and write your name on the back of your



Send us your tape, a photo of yourself and the coupon to the right address.

TENCHU SNEAKS ON TO PSP

Sega have announced that their stealth assassin game, *Tenchu*, will leap out of the shadows and onto PSP in 2006. Rather than being a completely new game, *Tenchu PSP* will feature a bloody trip through previous games from PSone and PS2. With Wi-Fi multiplayer and bonus content confirmed, this hackfest should be interesting.

BIG RED ONE: Rumour has it a new *OutRun* will be appearing on all consoles, which is great news.

OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST

The greatest arcade racing game ever made powerslides onto PSP. Give thanks.

If you had the pleasure of playing *OutRun 2* in the arcades or on Xbox, you'll know that it's a *special* game – a sparkly, sun-drenched arcade miracle that looks, sounds and plays like the best dream you've ever had fused with a wild sugar rush. And if the recently registered US trademark 'Outrun: Coast2Coast' can be believed, you can sample its magic for the first time on PSP early next year.

The beautifully simplistic powerslide-heavy gameplay should complement the handheld's shoulder buttons perfectly and the dip-in-and-out mission structure should help even the most tedious of commutes fly by. And better yet, it isn't simply a port of the old game – Sega are releasing an entirely new sequel, named *Coast 2 Coast*, that'll also be appearing on PS2. This means that there'll likely be some Wi-Fi connection options, perhaps to exchange score and lap time data between versions or unlock new cars and tracks. Mmm, delicious.

PSM4 RECKONS *The prospect of playing multi-player* OutRun *with four other people over Wi-Fi sounds tasty. But Hell, we'd have settled for a single-player, 'cause there's nothing quite like* OutRun *– it's so fast it makes Speedy Gonzalez look like Regular Gonzalez and has one of the best videogame soundtracks of all time. Magical Sound Shower, anyone? Aaaah, bliss. Oh, and these shots are from* OutRun 2, *so don't get too excited. Oh, go on then.*

BOX OF TRICKS: This is the Xbox version, but it won't look much different on PS2.

MONSTER MUNCH: Those are monsters, OK. Best hunt them.

"KILL THAT T-REX! KILL IT! KIIIILLLL IT!"

SPECIES EXTINCTION COMES TO PSP

Monster Hunter on PS2 was an RPG that featured some of the most astounding monsters outside of *Shadow Of The Colossus*, but was betrayed by bogging you down in busywork and generally being a bit empty. And now, under the name *Monster Hunter Freedom*, it's on PSP.

And there's been a shedload of changes. Last time, see, you were meant to be playing online, but as we all know, hardly anyone plays PS2 online. So this time there's a more fleshed-out single-player mode, a more in-depth home village to mess about in, some minigames, new weapons and equipment, guild cards than can be exchanged in Wi-Fi play to earn rewards, and, erm, some cats that will prepare meals for you in your kitchen. No, really. It all looks bloody lovely, and we can only hope that it realises the potential that was present in the PS2 version.

PSM4 RECKONS *It's going to need to be a lot better than on PS2, but at the same time, there's potential for this to be one of PSP's better RPGs. We shall see. Review very soon, hopefully.*

TAKE IT TO THE STREETS: Mmm, *Street Fighter* in portable form. Just what we wanted.

LOTS OF CHARACTERS: There's an absolute stack of characters to play with.

TAKE CHUN-LI TO BED...

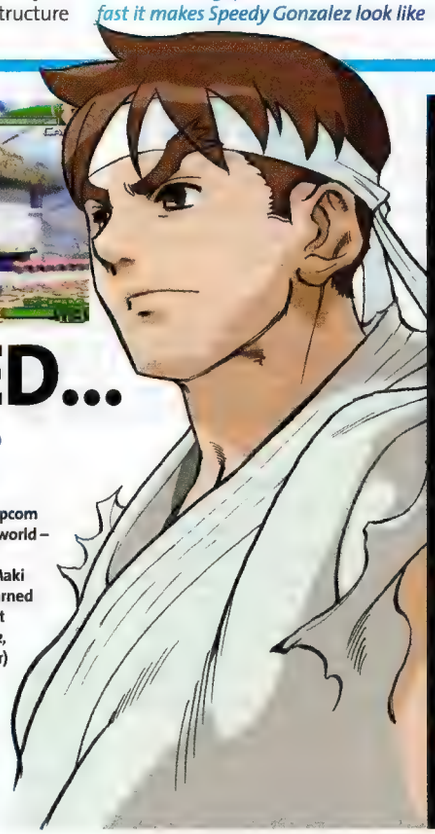
...Or take Ryu to the zoo, Blanka to the park or Eddie Honda to Weightwatchers – finally, it's *Street Fighter* on PSP. Praise be.

Though this month *Smackdown! Vs Raw* gives PSP its first good beat-'em-up, we're still craving something a little more fast-paced and arcadey than the increasingly sim-like wrestling games. Helpful, then, that... ah, you can see where we're going with this.

Yep, it's *Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max*, which takes the crown for 'most convoluted game title' if nothing else. But we've had a go on this, and it's basically everything you could want from an *SF* game – bold, brash, lightning-quick, loads of depth, masses of characters and – most importantly – Wi-Fi play.

New stuff? There's a bit, yeah. There's the Battle Mode, which lets players take part in tag team rucks, a Wi-Fi League Battle Mode to allow up to eight players to take part in a mini-tournament together, and there's some characters that, if not exactly new to Capcom scrappers, are new to the *Street Fighter* world – in come Yun (baseball cap, supremely twattish elbow-length yellow gloves), Maki (blonde, the kind of girl your mother warned you about) and Eagle (wears braces, isn't actually an eagle) from *Capcom Vs SNK 2*, plus Ingrid (the most Aryan woman ever) from *Capcom Fighting Evolution*.

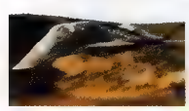
PSM4 RECKONS *Capcom surely can't go wrong with this. Our brief play of it suggested SFA3M will be supremely joyous stuff and should provide the sort of old-school fighting fun that PSP's been crying out for since the day it was cut from Ken Kutaragi's umbilical cord.*

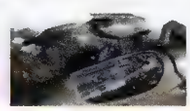


"THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS"

PSP'S FIRST MOVIE/ GAME COMBO

In a somewhat bizarre move, the film and videogame wings of Sony Entertainment have joined forces and are releasing a UMD that contains both stellar futuristic racer *WipEout* and, er, stupid-yet-entertaining robot plane flick STEALTH. But it's more than just a hastily cobbled-together fun pack – there's new STEALTH-themed content you can unlock in *WipEout*, including three new tracks and even the titular robot plane itself as a playable craft. This is an interesting – if slightly mystifying – idea, and has us thinking, what other combos could there be? *Death Jr* and Ghostbusters, perhaps?





STEALTH then play some *WipEout*.

Accelerator

SCANDALOUS GOSSIP. INSIDER DIRT. ZERO BULLSHIT

SOMETHING WE MYST

If whispers from the Far East are to be believed then the classic point 'n' click adventure *Myst* will hit PSP in 2006.

The famed and acclaimed title from PC days of yore should be a magnificent addition to the PSP catalogue, what with its stunningly realistic worlds and simplistic control system. Plus, isn't it about time we had a great RPG for our handheld pleasure? At present, details are fairly scarce as to what the PSP version will present but our money is on a quality incarnation and possibly downloadable worlds and items. We're also pre-empting the story to form some sort of prequel as the current *Myst* series concluded this year on PC and Mac. We're trawling our sources as we type and rest assured we'll have the scoop once the it drops. Keep it PSM2 next month when the *Myst* will be clear and we'll present you with the full in-depth lowdown. Oh good.

GETTING MYST: this should be very good. We shall see.

HEAD-SCRATCHING: There'll be the usual Myst puzzles to tax you.

ATTACK AND FIELD

The first turn-based military strategy game is set to command a place on PSP from late February. And it's Ubisoft that are leading the assault.

Controlling an arsenal of 15 army divisions and 11 commanding officer, you'll be able to take your strategic battles to the air, sea and land with *Field Commander*. This tactical affair will see you battling terrorist organisations while carefully plotting your next move like a chess champion.

It looks a helluva lot like *Command & Conquer* if you ask us, so should, therefore, be great. And we can't wait to get our hands on it next month. It should be good. Either way, we'll keep you posted. Stick with us. Oh good.

FOOTBALL IS *FINALLY* COMING HOME

After *Champ Manager* on PSP, a *proper* management game is on the horizon – PSM2 grills *Football Manager*'s Miles Jacobson.

My favourite story is the guy who dressed up in a suit when he reached his first cup final," reveals Sports Interactive MD Miles Jacobson. As PSM2 can testify, *Football Manager* isn't just the world's most addictive game, but a lifestyle handicap – one team member regular sneaks out of bed to manage Cardiff City at 2am, to his girlfriend's obvious delight. In fact, *Football Manager* has been cited as a decisive factor in 35 real-life divorce cases. Pop legend Robbie Williams even had to snap the game disk on his last tour because he was playing it too much.

proud to confirm that the game will be the first of a PSP franchise. "We're certainly looking at doing annual releases with new features each year," confirms Miles.

The PSP version will be a fairly radical departure. "Anyone hoping *FM* on PSP is going to be just like their home computer version is going to be disappointed," admits Miles. "It simply wouldn't work. Instead we're creating something that players can pick up and play for ten minutes, put it down and then come back later." But while the PSP version will feature less data than the PC version – "categories have been merged to make them fit on the PSP screen" reveals Miles – the incredible core appeal remains the same. Basically, it's so realistic, *every* decision seems to have an affect on results – and it's a game you're still playing mentally hours after you've put it down.

// "WE'RE LOOKING AT DOING ANNUAL RELEASES EACH YEAR" //

So perhaps it's good news that you won't be able to share your PC/Mac save data with the PSP version. "No," confirms Miles. "The PSP version is designed specifically for a handheld. We wanted it to be a bit easier to pick up and play." Key features from the recent *FM '06* PC version will survive. "Well, the home page (a single screen of vital information such upcoming fixtures and club finances) was created with PSP in mind and made the crossover to the PC and Mac," Miles points out. "*FM Portable* will also be fully updated with the transfer activity from the January '06 window". PSM2 is

PSM RECKONS *We're always banging on about developers making games designed for PSP, rather than churning out direct ports, so the PSP version shouldn't be seen as a compromise, but sensible streamlining. We're hugely optimistic, but will reserve judgement for next month when we'll have the exclusive hands-on of* Football Manager PSP. *Can't wait.*

PROOF! FOOTBALL MANAGER HELPS YOU MANAGE YOUR LIFE

Football Manager's a learning tool for the modern-day businessman, if not a valuable life skills tool. Proof? Look at this...

TAKE RISKS

You're 2-1 down in the cup with ten minutes to go, and your star striker's having a 'mare. You've got a young lad on the bench with raw potential, but no track record. Go with your gut instinct and take a risk. Two goals later, your 'Super Sub' has saved your season.
LESSON: It pays to take a risk – and you can't rely on people by reputation alone.

YOUR LANGUAGE DEFINES YOUR REALITY

Your star player's out injured and the media want to know whether you'll miss him. However bad things are, admit that losing the player is a blow, but that you've got the resources to cope. Result? The injured player is flattered that you'll miss him, but the fans don't fear his absence. Great.
LESSON: Think about the implications of what you say for all parties concerned. In life, too.

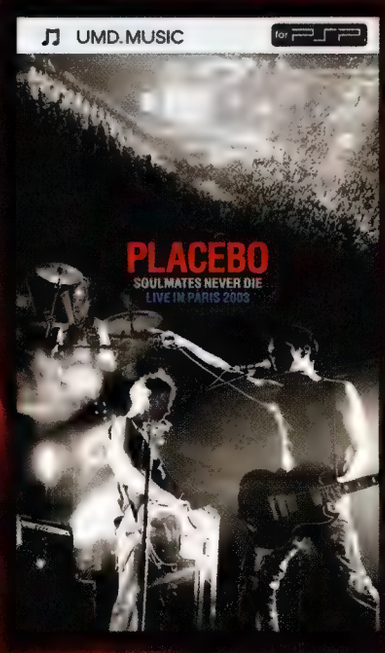
IF IT AIN'T BROKE DON'T FIX IT

You've got a strong team who've been getting results– so why change things? Dipping into the transfer market to buy a new striker just because you can, will only upset morale. Equally, don't go tinkering with tactics if everything's running smoothly.
LESSON: Don't interfere, just because you feel left out.

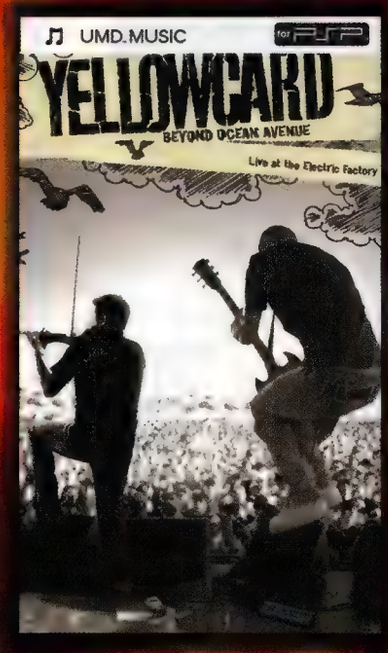
THE BEST LIVE MUSIC ON THE MOVE

KYLIE MINOGUE
SHOWGIRL
GREATEST HITS TOUR LIVE

COLDPLAY
LIVE 2003



PLACEBO
SOULMATES NEVER DIE
LIVE IN PARIS 2003



YELLOWCARD
BEYOND OCEAN AVENUE
LIVE AT THE ELECTRIC FACTORY

DAFT PUNK
INTERSTELLA 5555

EMI MUSIC UMD™ AVAILABLE NOW

for PSP™

UMD™ UNIVERSAL MEDIA DISC

ALSO AVAILABLE ON DVD VIDEO

Music from EMI

Accelerator

72 SMACK-DOWN! VS RAW 2006
Finally, a decent beat-'em-up comes to PSP. But it is it worth a flutter? Find out right here, right now.

74 STAR WARS BATTLE-FRONT 2
Star Wars coming to PSP can only be a good thing. Go mental at the Ewoks – handheld style.

78 NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED
Can the new *NFS* replace *Burnout* in our hearts? Let's see...

LIVE AND DIRECT FROM YOUR LIVING ROOM

Why Sony's Location Free TV for PSP could change everything.

Sony have been banging on about broadband networks and wireless systems for years now. Something about how in the future everything's going to be 'connected' and 'great'. Well, with PSP firmware update 2.5 this concept takes the massive step from a vacuous 'vision' to an actual reality.

From version 2.5, your PSP is compatible with Sony's new Location Free TV system. What's that? Well it's a system that consists of two boxes – one sits in your lounge and you plug all your AV gear into (DVD player, satellite, iPod, etc) and the other box is a hand-held 'tablet' screen that you can carry around your home. The first box streams video and audio to the second, so you can watch DVDs in the garden or Bargain Hunt on the bog.

The really clever bit, though, is the panel's ability to connect to wireless hotspots wherever you are in the world and allow you to access your living room box back home. In theory you could watch a DVD playing on your player or have full control of your living room's Sky+ box (and so on) from anywhere. In tests it's a bit shaky (streaming flawless video and sound is still quite a stretch for most hotspots) but it works and uplink speeds (and video quality) are getting better all the time.

The amazing news just in is that if you have a Location Free TV box at home, you can now enjoy all the features you would have got with the tablet part of the system, but on your PSP. And the living-room box that makes it all happen (Sony's tablet-free LF-PK1) is on sale in the US now for just $320. (That's £185.)

It's an incredible new way of thinking about technology. Now, rather than concentrate on miniaturising electronic items, making ever smaller and ever lighter phones, MP3 players, TVs, PDAs etc, the emphasis is now on access to your existing equipment. Leave that iPod, portable DVD player, laptop, telephone, *everything* at home – just take a Location Free device (be it an LF tablet, computer or – now – PSP) and connect to your full size, full fat, full feature gear back home as if you were sat right in front of it.

Operate the on-screen virtual remote control on your PSP and it'll make your LFTV box back home fire infrared signals (from its IR emitter) at your boxes. Your boxes respond just like you were sat in front of them pressing the buttons (but in actuality you're on a snowmobile in Iceland). The video and audio is streamed from your gear, over the net and onto your PSP via it's wireless access. It's that simple.

The only limitation is the range of your PSP's wireless power (you need to be within 50m tops of a wireless access point, or 'hotspot'), but with more and more springing up in coffee shops, trains, airports and public spaces, it won't be long before you're always enjoying mobile phone-style coverage and signal strength.

// "WATCH MOVIES OR PLAY PS3 VIA PSP FROM ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD" //

PSM RECKONS *This could change everything. Watch your movies, listen to your music, watch your TV and even play PS3 via PSP from anywhere in the world. It's the first steps in a whole new form of technology – you can finally leave all those cables and discs at home where they belong. PSP just got a lot more essential.*

SOON YOU WILL KNOW:

- Ten amazing must-know things about your PSP
- Which games you **MUST** buy, play and enjoy
- How to put your music, photos and movies on PSP
- The first news on PSP2...

This is PSP

Welcome on board Sony's express train to instant happiness **anytime, anywhere**. You've just got a PSP (or Santa's about to stuff one in your sock) and you're (officially) among the world's **coolest**. What you need now is four pages of raw PSP-ness to make sure you're getting the utter utmost from your **new machine**. Six pages just like the ones that follow, in fact.

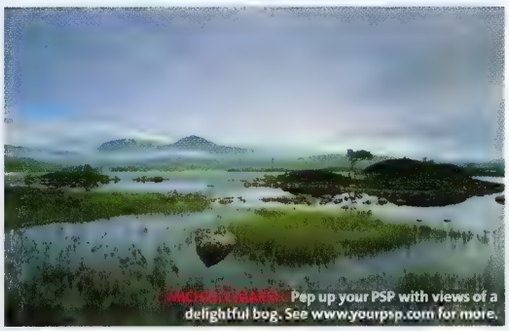
KNOW THIS NOW!

You've uncorked your **PSP** from its box. You've fired it up and you've played a game or two. Now you **MUST** know the following...

1 CHANGE YOUR BACKGROUND

Leave your PSP unmolested and the background colour will magically change on the first of every month. And should you strive for individuality, you can set any image as a backdrop to your PSP menu action.

Simply go to 'System', go down to 'System Settings', choose 'Backdrop' then select one of the images in your Photos folder. There you go – Fido's friendly face greeting you every time you spark up your PSP. Couldn't be easier.



MICHAEL CRANFORD: Pep up your PSP with views of a delightful bog. See www.yourpsp.com for more.

DIGITAL VISION

2 WITNESS THE FIRST PSP PICS

Yes, these are the first ever shots of PlayStation Portable, released to the world in December 2003 as an indication as to what PSP could be. Of course everyone (PSM2 included) leapt upon the images as the final design and – short of some tweakage with the joypad – it's surprisingly faithful to the finished article.

EARLY RISER: This is the first image of PSP. Note the smooth case and flat, flush, D-pad. The real thing is slightly less chic but looks just as lovely.

3 GET THE NEW FIRMWARE

So what's firmware? Firmware is the brains of your PSP. Its 'operating system' if you like. When you spark up your PSP without a game in (or press Home) you get to menus and options. This is your system software running and updating this 'firmware' adds options to the menus and fixes any problems they might have failed to find with the last update. The result is a quick and easy system of making sure that your PSP, with all its wireless functionality, is as up-to-date as possible. Want to see what version of the firmware you're running? From the main menu head left to 'System' then choose 'System Settings', then 'System Information'. See that number (most likely 2.0 or 2.1)? That's what version firmware you're running. Wow.

4 PROTECT YOUR SCREEN

There's one easy way – be reeeeeally careful with it. The shiny PSP finish may look good, but it's very prone to scratches and, after a few months of PSP ownership, you can expect a mark or two and dust and skin being trapped around the buttons (eurgh!).

The solution is to keep your PSP in a case (there are loads available and it's impossible to recommend one over the others) or, if you don't care what you look like, we find an old sock is an ideal way to protect your PSP when slinging it in a bag.

Another great way to protect your screen is to invest in a clear screen protector. These clear stickers stick over your screen and prevent any scuffs getting through to the surface. We recommend the Vtec screen protector (www.vtec.co.uk), which we use on our PSPs. It goes on blemish free and is totally invisible once applied.

5 KNOW THEY MYSTERY OF THE SQUARE BUTTON

Press the four buttons over to the right of the PSP. Notice anything? Yes, the ▢ button feels stickier and less smooth than the other three. Reason? They couldn't make it any smoother. ▢ is so close to the screen (and the screen's inner-workings take up so much space) that the sensor below this button is off to one side, unlike the other buttons with a clear, vertical 'throw'. Instead, a small arm relays your button pushes to the sensor. Gosh.

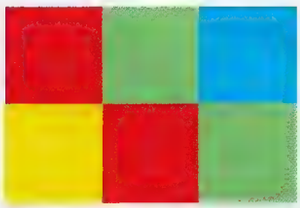
The system has been improved in later models (ie, all the units that are available in the UK) but a hefty 4,800 of the initial 800,000 units released in Japan were returned after the button stuck. A quick redesign later (that Sony have never admitted to) and everything is fine. Or at least a whole lot better than it was.

6 UNSTICK YOUR PIXELS

Heard talk of stuck pixels? Or do you have a PSP with tiny white dots where colours should be? These are most visible on black screens in games and, while hardly game-ruining, are a minor annoyance when you've just bought a brand new machine.

Fact is that your PSP may have one or two non-functioning pixels on its screen. The good news is that in our experience they don't increase in number (just because you've got two it doesn't mean the rest are about to follow) and there's even a simple fix that'll relight many off pixels after a few hours.

It's called the PSP Stuck Pixel Fixer and you can find it all over the internet.



Try a Google search or go to this link where we found it: http://www.psp-vault.com/modules.php?name=UpDownload&req=getit&lid=355.

The 'fixer' is in fact a movie that flashes up bright colours. Loop the video (from the playback options menu) and let it run for a few hours. Voila – no more stuck pixels (or at least one or two fixed, anyway).

7 UMD OR NOT UMD?

Sony had a bit of a crisis deciding whether to let PSP support your videos or not. The result is a strange half-way house between full video support and a total lockout: So, yes, you can put your videos onto your PSP but it's a total ball-ache doing so.

It works like this – Sony want you to buy UMD versions of all your films rather than 'rip' your DVDs (see later for more info) so they've made the process as complex as possible, and increasing security on DVD movies mean that many can't be encoded using current software. However, releasing a handheld video device that wouldn't play all the movies you already have on your computer would go down like a lead balloon. Hence the uncertainty and unhelpfulness of the PSP's video system. Fortunately we're here to help. Oh, yes.

8 BATTERY BOOSTING

To get the maximum life out of your battery, do this: run the PSP until the battery is completely dead, then charge it to max in one long charge. We often leave ours on charge overnight. Repeated ten minute burst of charge on a half-emptied battery will whittle away at its lifespan.

Once you've got a maximum charge, you should try to make it last as long as possible. Running the sound through the built-in speakers is a draw on the battery. It's far better to play with headphones. Similarly, if you can bear to, play at...

9 MAX BRIGHTNESS

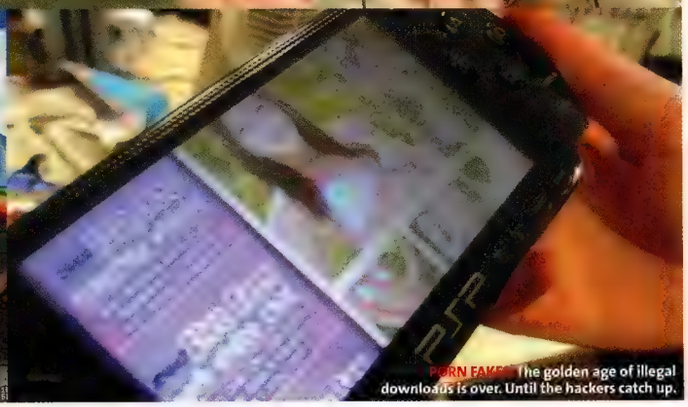
If you're playing PSP while it's connected to the mains charger, there is a new, fourth level of screen brightness available to you. Just press the 'Screen' button (the one with a square on it on the bottom front on the machine, below the screen) and you'll cycle through the three familiar levels of brightness before reaching an even brighter fourth. Hey, our eyes.

10 GET HIGHLY ILLEGAL STUFF FOR FREE* *Or not

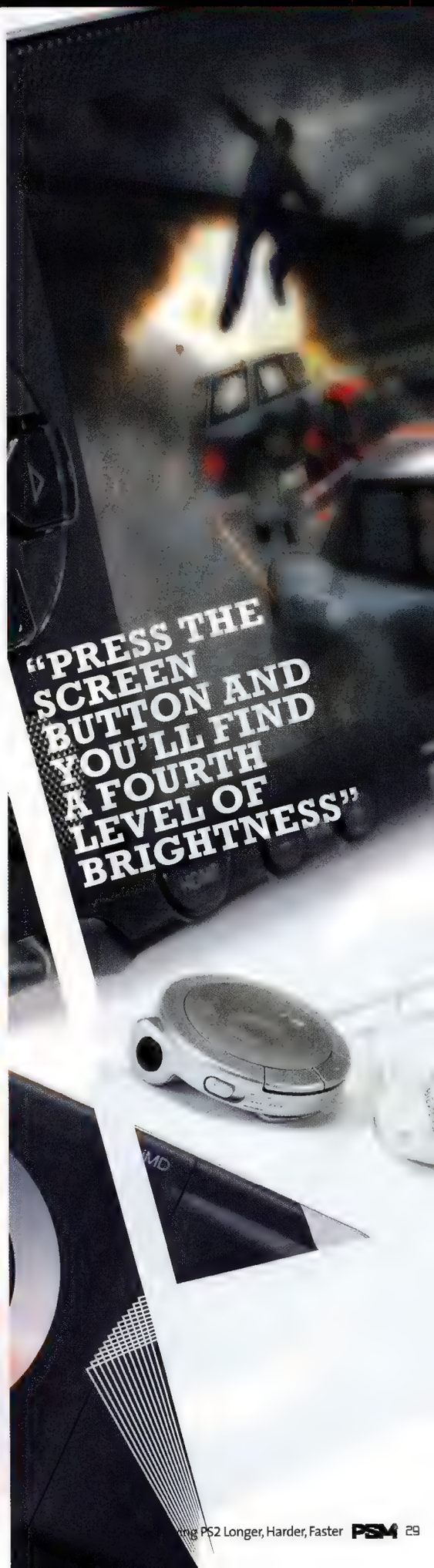
Back in the early days of PSP, much was made of hackers' abilities to break the brains of your machine and put their own games on there. For years people have been downloading code from old game cartridges and posting them on the 'net for play via emulator programs. It didn't take long before these emulators were ported – and you saw screenshots of us playing Super Mario World on PSP.

Unfortunately (and fortunately for Sony) those days are pretty much gone and are included here as a curio rather than anything useful. These days the security built-into firmware versions 2.0 onwards have prevented any emulator being run on PSP. You could always try and find a PSP with firmware version 1.5 or before which will run the wealth of PSP hacked games (including classics from Nintendo, Sega and a host of old arcade games) but you'll never be able to play current games on it.

ASSAULT ON BATTERY: Expect a new longer-lasting battery to be released in 2006.



PORN FAKES: The golden age of illegal downloads is over. Until the hackers catch up.



PUT YOUR STUFF ON YOUR PSP

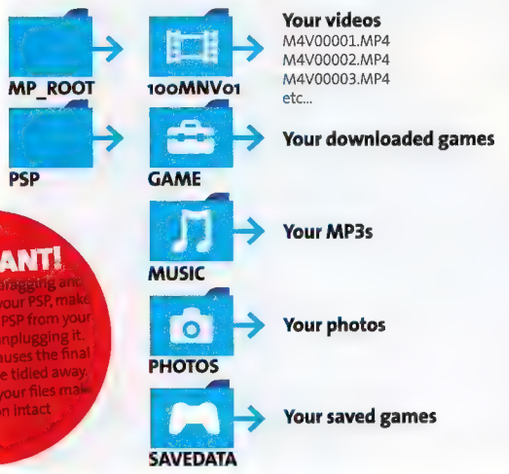
It's **not** just for games, y'know.

STEP 1 FIRST THINGS FIRST

Format your memory card on your PSP. Yes, incredible though it may seem, the card you get with your PSP isn't formatted with the right 'Music', 'Photos' and video folders you'll need. So BEFORE you get too involved with your first game, go to 'System,' and choose 'Format Card' to wipe it clean and get it ready for your stuff.

STEP 2 CONNECT YOUR PSP

First thing you're going to need is a USB lead that'll run from your PSP to your computer (be it Mac or PC). Plug in both ends then engage 'USB Mode' from the 'System' menu. Your PSP will now give up its brains to your computer and it should appear as an external hard-drive in the My Computer section (if you're using PC) or on the desktop (if you're on Mac).



IMPORTANT!
When you're done dragging and dropping files onto your PSP, make sure you 'Eject' your PSP from your computer before unplugging it. 'Ejecting' the PSP causes the final bits of the file to be tidied away. Only that way will your files make the transition intact

STEP 3.1 MUSIC ON PSP

Drag and drop your MP3s and AAC music files onto your 'Music' folder. Choose 'Music' from the Menu and you'll see your music files there, ready to be played.

STEP 3.2 PHOTOS ON PSP

Like music, just drag your pics (as JPGs) to your Photos folder. Choose 'Photos' from the menu and... Wowser!

STEP 3.3 MOVIES ON PSP

And then it all gets a bit more complicated... You're going to need to convert your movies (be they already on your PC as AVIs, MOVs, etc, or still trapped on a DVD disc) to PSP's own special MP4 standard. What's more, you're going to have to call these files in the weird naming format your PSP likes in order to make them work.

And remember, movie files tend to be HUGE. You'll need at least a 512Mb stick in your PSP if you want to get a film on there.

First you've got to make a root folder on your PSP. Format your stick as we directed earlier then, with your PSP's stick open, you'll see a folder called 'PSP' (inside which you'll find folders for game saves, music, photos and games) and perhaps a few other tech files. Now, on your PC, create a folder alongside the PSP folder in the usual way. Call this folder MP_ROOT. The capitals and underscore are important – get it wrong and it won't work at all.

Finally, double-click this new MP_ROOT folder. Make a folder inside called 100MNV01. Again, that name is important. Remember to use caps. This is the home for your video files. Now copy your MP4 files into this folder. You'll find a selection of MP4 files on your PSM2 DVD. Open the DVD on your PC, open the 'PSP Stuff' folder and drag and drop the MP4 files you find (always called something like M4V12345.MP4) into your 100MNV01 folder on your PSP.

The real trick is to make your own PSP-compatible MP4s of course. For this, you'll need some converter

PSP2... IT'S ON THE WAY

Your PSP is a powerful device, but even this miracle of miniaturisation won't last forever. Rest assured that plans are afoot for a successor to PSP, one that takes the technology established in PSP to a whole new level.

IMPROVED WI-FI

Your PSP uses the 802.11b standard. It's very efficient in terms of power usage but – frankly – it just hasn't got the range these days. If Sony's vision of 'Location Free' access to your media (see page 24 for the latest news on this) is to come true, then hotspots and PSP are going to have to become way more powerful.

Currently your wireless PSP connection struggles after 10m. Even less if there's a couple of walls in the way. Expect PSP2 to feature full 802.11g power at least – able to go as far as 100m. The result? No more patchy hotspots. With 802.11g (and the improvements in hotspot power that are already rolling out) it'll mean a mobile phone-style level of coverage.

BETTER SCREEN

While the quality of PSP's screen isn't in question, its size and weight and power demands really define what PSP is. With current technology, PSP can't be any thinner and battery life can't extend beyond four hours of intensive play. New electroluminescent displays being developed by Sony and their rivals do not require backlighting – instead, they bounce reflected light from their surface just like any real-world object we see. The result is a more 'real' image. A picture on an electroluminescent display doesn't look like a 'picture' at all – it looks like the real thing. And because of the elimination of backlighting, the screens not only use less power but are much thinner too. So thin, in fact, that they can be bent into any shape and could, conceivably, be incorporated into clothing or home furnishings. Could PSP2 be some sort of jacket? Or perhaps a set of scatter cushions?

BETTER BATTERY LIFE

The electroluminescent display alone will go some way to improving battery life, as will bigger on-board memory, which will require less spinning of the UMD disc – but battery technology itself is improving all the time. The batteries required for ever longer lifespans are getting smaller and lighter every year. New nickel hydride technology has produced batteries that could last four times longer and (amazingly) are able to charge to full power in a mere quarter of an hour. Expect a new battery to become available for PSP (remember, its battery is removable) before this technology is used from the outset for PSP2.

NEW DISC TECHNOLOGY

Will Sony drop the UMD for PSP2? This depends on how the movie format takes off. Minidisc, as a format, is practically dead now, but Sony flogged it for ten years before quietly admitting defeat. Most likely PSP2 will include UMD, but will have the capacity to play recordable UMD discs, while not able to make recordings itself. Expect the first recordable UMD decks to be home units, perhaps built into cases alongside existing DVD recorders – bounce your recordings to UMD for watching on the move. Nice.

SMALLER AND LIGHTER

Lighter would certainly be an advantage. (Pocket a PSP and then run for the bus and the chances are your trolleys will wind up round your ankles.) Stronger plastics will mean an end to PSP's internal metal frame and the new screen and battery will make PSP2 potentially half the weight of PSP. As for smaller, do you really want PSP2 to be any smaller? We like our screens BIG. That said, perhaps the flexible display will allow some kind of folding motion allowing it to halve in size while in your pocket, then fold out to a full 16:9 display when you need it. Just like a handkerchief. Well, kind of.

NEW POWER

What kind of chip will be in PSP2? Well, top Sony bod Ken Kutaragi has already outlined his plan for a microCELL, a miniature version of the chip found inside PS3. This chip will, says Ken, eventually find its way into mobile phones, so it's almost certainly going to be inside PSP2 before it get there. Will PSP2 be as powerful as PS3? If Ken has his way it will be.

UPDATING YOUR FIRMWARE

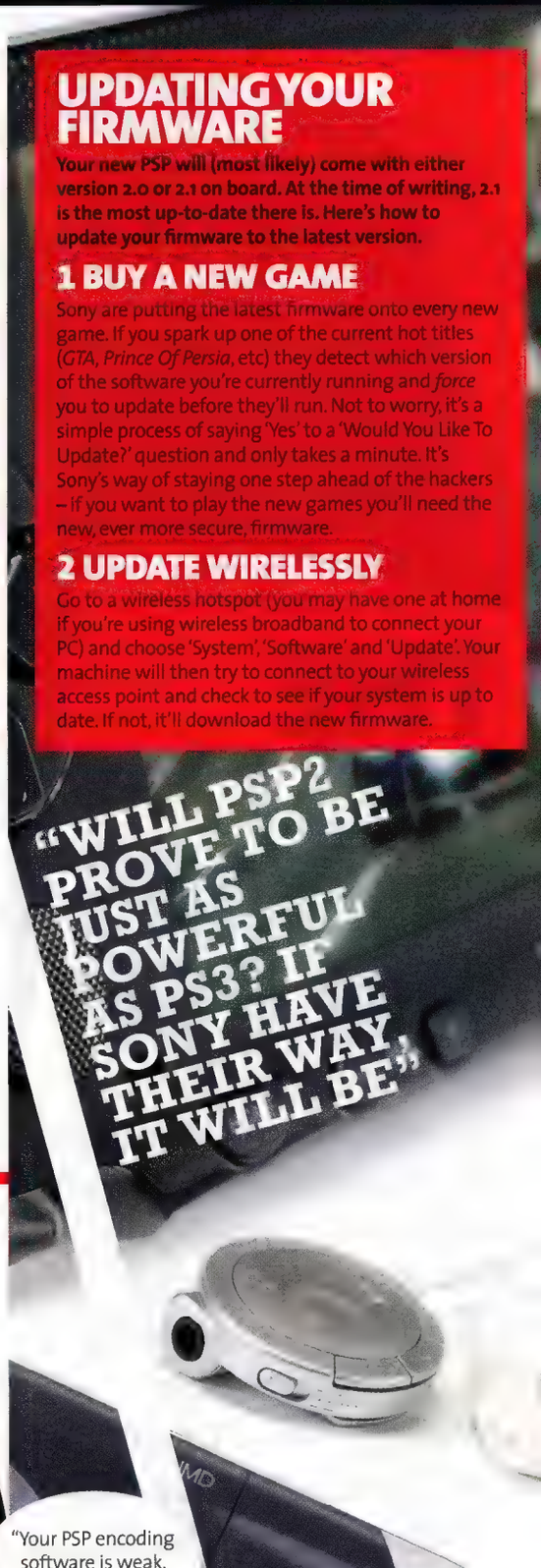
Your new PSP will (most likely) come with either version 2.0 or 2.1 on board. At the time of writing, 2.1 is the most up-to-date there is. Here's how to update your firmware to the latest version.

1 BUY A NEW GAME

Sony are putting the latest firmware onto every new game. If you spark up one of the current hot titles (*GTA*, *Prince Of Persia*, etc) they detect which version of the software you're currently running and *force* you to update before they'll run. Not to worry, it's a simple process of saying 'Yes' to a 'Would You Like To Update?' question and only takes a minute. It's Sony's way of staying one step ahead of the hackers – if you want to play the new games you'll need the new, ever more secure, firmware.

2 UPDATE WIRELESSLY

Go to a wireless hotspot (you may have one at home if you're using wireless broadband to connect your PC) and choose 'System', 'Software' and 'Update'. Your machine will then try to connect to your wireless access point and check to see if your system is up to date. If not, it'll download the new firmware.



software, but don't worry it's all free and it's all over the 'net. A quick cruise to www.download.com or www.versiontracker.com will give you a search box where you can look for PSP goodies. Download and try a few of the programs you find until you find one you like. We use PSP Video Express, PSP Video9, 3GP Converter and, on Mac, FFMpegX to convert vids. They all work just as well as each other.

To get a full DVD onto your PSP you'll have to rip it to your computer first, then convert it with your converter as above. (Though do check out Handbrake if you've got a Mac, which can rip and encode in one – though it takes ages.) Rip your DVD as an AVI or VOB file then convert it to MP4 and put it on your stick. What could, er... be easier...?

CONVERTING DVDS ON PSP: THE END OF THE DREAM?

Remember when the UMD movie format was first announced and you said "I'll just buy movies on DVD then rip them to Memory Stick"? Well those days are disappearing fast. The latest movies feature the worrying words "This DVD is uncopyable" on the back of the box.

This means if you load the DVD into your computer, go through the process of lifting the files onto your computer then use another program to encode them as MP4s, you may end up with hours of black screen.

Yes, currently, new discs carry encryption deep within the code that fudges up encoders. So we've found it impossible to get our Star Wars Episode III DVD onto our PSP. Boo, hiss. It remains to be seen whether hackers will update their rippers to beat the system or whether this is the end for DVD to PSP encoding.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

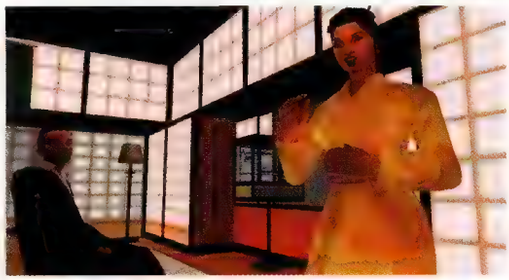
Got a PSP question? We're listening. Email your question to us at psm2@futurenet.co.uk with the subject line of 'PSP Help!' and we'll do our best to reply to you (and perhaps use your question in an upcoming feature). Cheers to everyone who emails!

THE BEST GAMES ON PSP

Let's be honest here. It's a bit of a sorry state of affairs when the number of must-buy PSP titles (the ones that have scored 90% or over) amount to three games. *Three!* But that's the way it is. Here, nevertheless is our must-buy list of games for PSP. If you're getting one in this Christmas make sure these games are alongside it.

SEEN AND DON: Toni meets up with the Don. Nice suit, eh?

1 GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES



Yes, it's *GTA* on your PSP. Or, more accurately, it's *Grand Theft Auto 3* on your PSP. If you love *GTA3* and want to play it all over again (with a slightly different sidestory and missions) then this is for you. If, however, you're sick to death of *GTA3* then this might not be so tempting. That said, for many gamers weaned on *Vice City* and *San Andreas* this is all new territory – and brilliantly designed, amazingly large territory it is too.

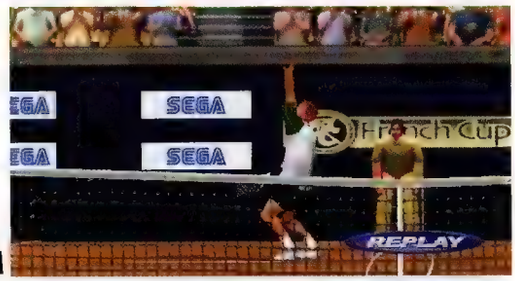
Do watch out for some lazy level design, though, which seems designed to make you cry with anger before you'll eventually shout with joy. Watch out for 'Taking The Piece' near the end of the second island (best described as 'needlessly awkward') and 'The Portland Chainsaw Masquerade' (notable for its relentless annoying bastard-hardness). Both of these missions may compel you to propel your PSP through the window. And that'd be an expensive mistake.

PSM2 VERDICT 90

2 VIRTUA TENNIS: WORLD TOUR

Making the ideal portable game is a dark art. Making a game work on a handheld format isn't just a matter of tailoring the graphical detail to fit the machine, there's some kind of strange game-tweaking at an intrinsic level that needs to be done which makes you want to play it on the move.

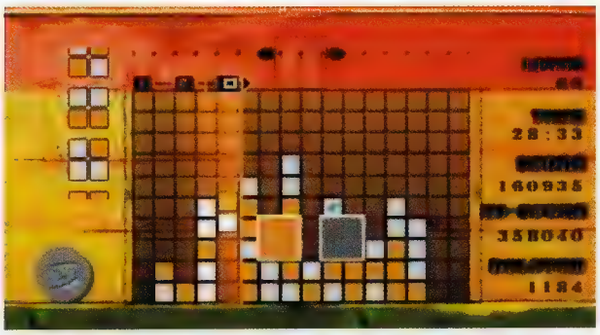
Such is the case with *Virtua Tennis: World Tour* on PSP – a game that is excellent on PS2 becomes unmissable on PSP. Not because it's any different to the PS2 game (it's exactly the same) but because tennis, with it's quick, points-based gameplay, unfussy graphics and simple controls just *suits* being played on PSP. Dive in, have a few games and switch off. Or go for a whole tournament. It doesn't matter if you play for two minutes during a TV-ad break or go at it for an hour in a full tournament, it just *works*.



Even if you don't like tennis you'll like this. And that's the highest praise you can give any sports game. You really should own this one.

PSM2 VERDICT 91

3 LUMINES



Games with falling blocks work on portable gaming devices – fact. But even so, the sheer playability of *Lumines* – PSP's take on the block-descending genre – took us by surprise. So much so that when we first reviewed it we didn't like it much. In fact, it took nine months before we realised that this simple tale of blocks was unputdownable. Even now, that revised UK score of 85% looks a bit tight – hence *Lumines*' position above *Burnout*.

Blocks fall across the wide PSP screen and you bunch them together. So far, so *Tetris*, but the ability to set off massive chain reactions and the scope for building, destroying and reconstructing the block-based 'world' that builds across the screen, starting at the bottom edge, raising up and snaking left and right, makes this something else. And after every five minutes, the music, background and blocks mutate into a new 'skin'.

Three words: better than *Tetris*.

PSM VERDICT 85

4 BURNOUT LEGENDS

Take the best bits of the first three *Burnout* games and shrink them down and put them into PSP. That's the basic premise for *Burnout Legends*, an excellent PSP racer that, at the time of release, was shown up by the brand new (super-lush) *Burnout Revenge* on PS2.

Not to worry, though, many of the features of the later games have now been adopted as a staple across all of *Burnout Legends*. 'Traffic Checking' (from *Burnout Revenge*) doesn't feature, but there's plenty of shoulder-barging and earning bonuses for bringing about the demise of your opponents, meaning that you're effectively playing *Burnout 1* with the gameplay of *Burnout 3*.

It looks great, it handles brilliantly. In fact the only thing wrong with it is if you 'just want to play *Burnout 2*', you can't – all the tracks from *1*, *2* and *3* are mish-mashed together to form a new game. Shame, that. We'd love to be able to play unmolested *BO1* on the bus.

PSM VERDICT 92

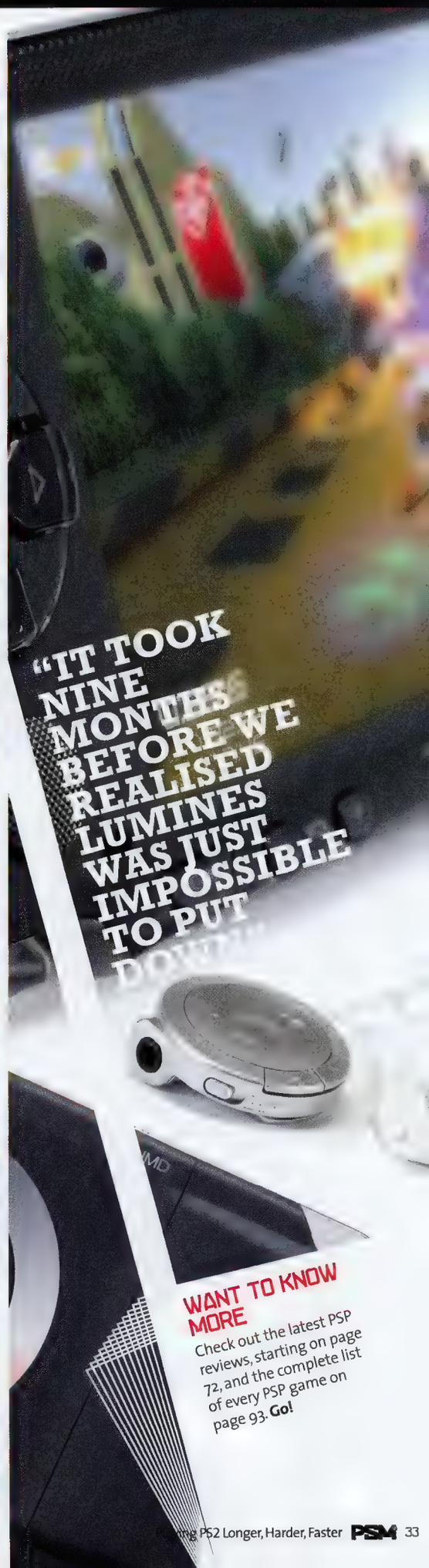
5 RIDGE RACER

The very first PSP game is still one of the best. There are tracks from previous *Ridge*'s scattered around (it's amazing being able to play the classic first *Ridge* track that used to be on a quid-a-go arcade machine, but is now on a console the size of your pocket) but the mix is so far and wide you never feel like you're replaying an old game.

And, to make things extra-fresh, there's a brand new 'nitro' system to boost speeds. Drift around corners and you gradually fill a boost meter. Fire off the amassed boost to increase your speed. Use it on straights to cream past the rest of the field or give it a quick squirt to recover from a crash or after out breaking the car in front.

It's a huge game, its handling is easily mastered and oh-so satisfying – this is a game that wants you to look and feel good. You'll be sliding sideways and feeling like 'the man' by your second go.

PSM VERDICT 88



WANT TO KNOW MORE

Check out the latest PSP reviews, starting on page 72, and the complete list of every PSP game on page 93. **Go!**

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PlayStation 2
JAK X
THE KILLER RACING GAME.
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PlayStation 2
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12+
NAUGHTY DOG
NAUGHTY DOG

HITMAN
BLOOD MONEY

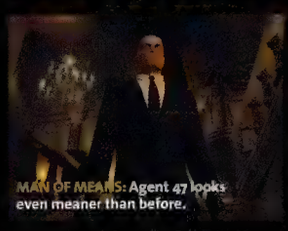
KILLING IS MY BUSINESS...

Agent 47 is back and he's more coldly murderous than ever before. Who else would even think about *killing Santa?*

Fact: *Hitman* is simultaneously one of the most interesting games to compare notes about, and the worst one in the entire world to be overheard discussing in a pub. Consider the following snippet: "Yeah, so I found a porn shoot going on in one of the back rooms, but after I garotted the photographer it was easy enough to rig the lights with C4 and take out my main target. Then I poisoned my secondary target's aphrodisiac. And stole his dressing gown. And shot his dog." An actual barmaid heard us say that. She looked terrified. And it's only going to get worse.

Then again, these are the things that make new *Hitman* great. Previous games rewarded you for killing enemies with a single shot and no unnecessary casualties, but this one goes further: the highest rank, and the biggest pay, goes to the killer who can make it look like *he was never there at all*. That means orchestrating elaborate 'accidents' for your targets, eliminating all evidence and getting away clean. It means pushing drunken party guests off balconies (hey, he slipped),

"THE HIGHEST RANK AND BIGGEST PAY GOES TO THE KILLER WHO CAN MAKE IT LOOK LIKE HE WAS NEVER ACTUALLY THERE AT ALL"



MAN OF MEANS: Agent 47 looks even meaner than before.

...and business is good

WHO IS 47?

He's the 47th in a series of clones developed under a secret government project – hence the barcode tattoo on the back of his neck. He briefly lived with a priest – no, not like *that* – but it all went badly wrong in *Hitman 2*, and now his only companion is a loyal canary. His favourite food is ham, and his interests include long walks on the beach and dressing up like people he's just murdered. Except we made up the bit about the ham.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Returning classics and all-new implements of death – if it's blunt, sharp or spits bits of metal, 47 can use it to end your misery.

£8.99

HAMMER
Inconspicuous. Makes a nice sound. Not very clinical. Leaves a mess.

£1.99

SYRINGE
Doesn't add to the body count. Silent. Unless you lock them in a deep-chest freezer, victims wake up and run around in their pants.

£9.99

BASEBALL BAT
Weighty. Difficult to explain, unless you're disguised as a baseball player.

£4.99

GARROTE WIRE
Quiet. Also cuts cheese. Useless when thrown. Cheesemonger/piano-tuner disguises hard to come by.

£64.99

SILENCED PISTOL
Easily explained. Reasonable at range. Feels a bit 'wrong'. Not designed for rapid firing.

IN IT FOR THE MONEY

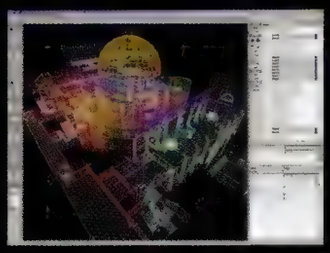
In previous *Hitman* games, money was like Jim Davidson – always there, but slightly distasteful and easy to ignore. This time round, that's all changed – anything used on a mission counts as an expense, from ammo to discarded guns and briefcases. Though you'll never run out of cash – each hit comes with a minimum payoff – it's worth the extra effort of satisfying your clientele to afford optional upgrades like silencers, extra-large clips, night-scopes and full-auto action for your guns. Maybe that'll make you think before you go chucking your sharp suit away to dress like a milkman.

• SCOPE #03 NIGHT VISION SCOPE / NVS 28 X 95
• SCOPE #01 MARKSMAN SCOPE 2.5 / 10 X 56
• SCOPE #02 SUPER SNIPER SCOPE / SS 20 X 42
• W2000 SNIPER RIFLE
• BARREL CARBON FIBER BARREL
• MAGAZINE 12 ROUND DOUBLE CAPACITY CLIP
• SILENCER #01 SUPPRESSION - 2508
• SILENCER #02 SUPPRESSION - 4508
• TRIGGER GROUP SEMI AUTO ACTION FULL AUTO ACTION
• BOLT ACTION CUSTOM BOLT ACTION

SCOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL: A suppressor, a double-capacity clip and a recoil-less stock, please. And do you have it in mauve?

AN INSIDE JOB

Although authentic-looking level design's always been a strong point in *Hitman*, there's always been a sense that you're being channelled in a certain direction. That's changed for *Blood Money* – they've hired an actual architect to make the layouts more realistic and free-form, so if you don't fancy getting frisked at the front door, you can always nip around the back and slip past a snoozing bodyguard. Multi-tiered levels make it easier to take a sniper shot from the upper decks, and 47's superior movement reduces frustration. It's superb.



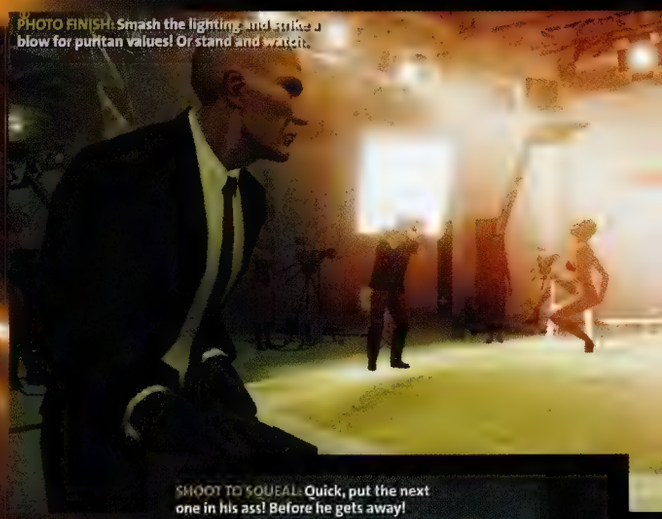
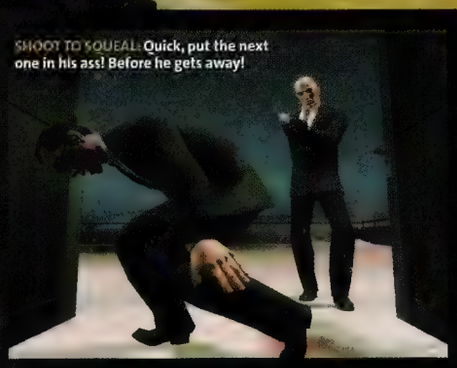
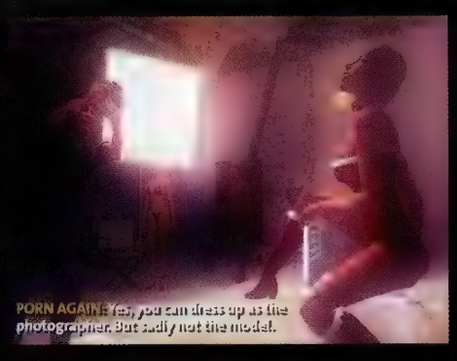


PHOTO FINISH: Smash the lighting, and strike a blow for puritan values! Or stand and watch.



SHOOT TO SQUEAL: Quick, put the next one in his ass! Before he gets away!



PORN AGAIN: Yes, you can dress up as the photographer. But sadly not the model.

HITMAN
BLOOD MONEY

HO HO HURGH: Check out the have-a-go-hero in the thong. She's next.

DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

As ever, stealing clothes is crucial to *Hitman*. What you wear defines where you can go, what you can carry, who'll talk to you and what you can do without raising suspicions. Sadly, 47 still can't dress up as a lady or don a toupee – without a hat, he's slightly suspicious – but he's got a wider range of costume-changes than ever.

CHEF BRIDGES: "What, him? Yeah, he's just drunk. And that's gazpacho soup. No, don't taste it. Bad idea."

'MUFF SAID: "Hey, I think there's something wrong with the furnace. Look closer. No, closer than that..."

REAL SHADY: "Yes, I've just been hired. The barcode? What? Oh, that's just my last girlfriend's name. She's Swedish."

blowing up chandeliers (woodworm, probably) and dropping toasters in baths ("Yes, officer, he just loved eating toast in the bath..." – *dramatic sniffle*).

It also means there's an increased need for interaction with other people – where previous games let 47 glide through whole levels without even making human contact, chatting to people to obtain items and information is now necessary for all but the easiest objectives. Mercifully, though, the AI's been tweaked so this isn't such a hair-trigger gamble – guards'll simply tell you to piss off rather than shoot on sight, civilians will get visibly suspicious instead of running off shrieking and cops will shout warnings instead of instantly opening fire. Even

"SECURITY WON'T BAT AN EYELID AT A WORKMAN WITH A NAIL GUN, BUT WAVE IT ABOUT IN A CROWDED AREA AND THEY'LL START TO GET A BIT EDGY"

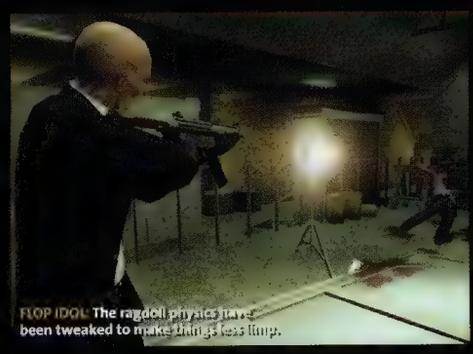
what you're carrying makes a difference – security won't bat an eyelid at a workman carrying a hammer or a screwdriver, and won't mind if you're carrying a nail gun in the back rooms, but *will* get edgy if you start waving it about in a crowded area. 47 automatically hides incriminating kit (guns, for instance) behind his back, so he's inconspicuous at a decent distance. Even friskings are easier – get caught packing, and you can opt to simply surrender your guns instead of shooting your way out. In one moment of genius, we simply joined in a tour group to get a guided escort around an opera house where we were planning a 'job.' Then, for the fun of it, we drugged the tour guide, hid him in a fridge, led the next tour dressed in his suit and scarpered when all the tourists moaned about us not saying anything. Tee-hee!

SHEIKH, NOT STIRRED: Different levels of security react in different ways.

IFS AND BUTTS

Mercifully, 47's no longer so helpless when he *is* discovered,

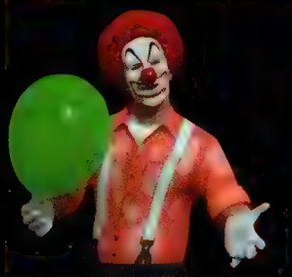
HOLD STILL: Cops sometimes risk a shot even when you've got a shield.



FLOP IDOL: The ragdoll physics have been tweaked to make things less limp.

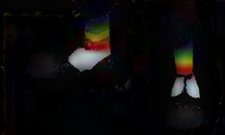
ASSASSINATING THE ASSASSIN

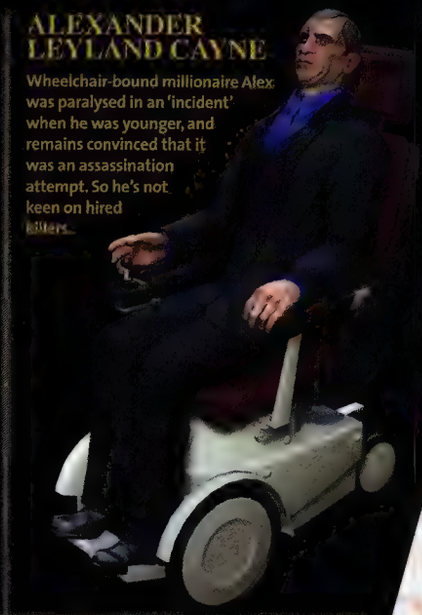
Unfortunately, 47 has a few enemies who'd like nothing better than to see that shiny bald head buried six feet under. Here's a selection of bad guys to keep an eye out for.



CORKY THE CLOWN

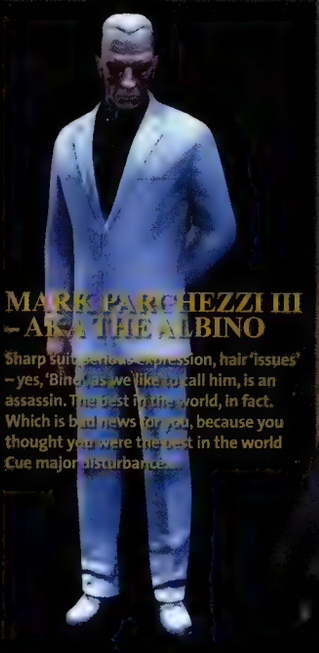
Mr The Clown used to have a car rental business before he hit the bottle and wound up making balloon animals for over privileged heirs. How much of a drunk is he? Let's put it this way: that isn't a fake nose.





ALEXANDER LEYLAND CAYNE

Wheelchair-bound millionaire Alex was paralysed in an 'incident' when he was younger, and remains convinced that it was an assassination attempt. So he's not keen on hired killers.

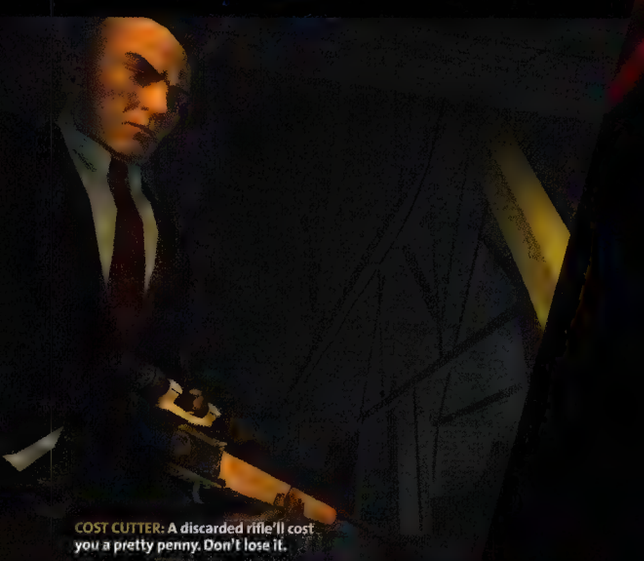


MARK PARCHEZZI III – AKA THE ALBINO

Sharp suit, serious expression, hair 'issues' – yes, 'Bino', as we like to call him, is an assassin. The best in the world, in fact. Which is bad news for you, because you thought you were the best in the world. Cue major disturbance...

THE BLACK WIDOW

Margeaux Le Blanc has it all – looks, ginger hair, money and a wealthy fiancee. Her role in the game isn't clear, but given her job title, things aren't looking too good for Johnny No-Shirt.



COST CUTTER: A discarded rifle'll cost you a pretty penny. Don't lose it.

HITMAN
BLOOD MONEY

HEF FROM ABOVE: Who *could* this aging pornographer be based on?

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Veteran hitmen might remember that the last game was told almost entirely in flashback, starting with 47 bleeding out in a shoddy apartment and ending with him sneaking past police and whacking the crooked cop who set him up. *Blood Money* fits neatly around this 24-hour period – the first Opera House mission reveals exactly how 47 got injured, and the rest of the game afterwards deals with his hunt for the people who are trying to shut the Agency down.

Will 47 end up whacking the president, as hinted in the last game's end sequence? Io won't say, but don't get *too* excited about the thought of squinting out of a book depository window...

either. Taking a page from the last *Splinter Cell*, *Hitman* now incorporates full-frontal attacks like a nose-crunching headbutt – perfect for those moments when you're rumbled but close enough to keep things quiet. Melee weapons can be used up close too, though less effectively than in a sneak attack. Best of all, 47's now got disarm manoeuvres, so he's never helpless against an armed adversary – and it's also possible to grab a human shield. Most satisfyingly, 47's no longer stymied by shin-high obstacles, hopping over them like the professional he is. Balconies and ledges are easier to tackle – simply push towards them and you'll leap across. 47 can grab civilians and use them as human shields – though police will try to outflank you

YULE COP IT: Yes, Santa, we've got a surprise. No, it's not a sausage roll.

WING AND A PRAYER: We always feel guilty shooting girls. Not that it stops us.

"HITMAN CAN NOW HEADBUTT – PERFECT FOR WHEN YOU'RE RUMBLED BUT CLOSE ENOUGH TO KEEP THINGS QUIET"

GOON ARMY: Security will check you out before getting trigger-happy.

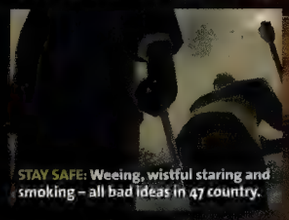
and even risk the odd shot. More bizarrely, it's possible to throw literally *anything* – knives come with a targeting reticule, but sausages, syringes and cheesewire tend to be met with a bewildered look and a hail of bullets. In fact, the only sour spot among the new moves is a slightly weedy push (eerily similar to Neo's fey fighting style in the new *Matrix* game, animated-deja-vu fans) and the fact that it's now almost *too* easy to simply tackle things head on. *Blood Money* deals with this simply by being super-hard – with no health packs, it only takes one solid volley of bullets to seriously ruin your day. There's still an element of stacking up victims as they pile gormlessly through a doorway, but unlike previous games there's no need to murder everyone in the level when this happens – concentrated 'pockets' of enemies thankfully mean that not everyone's alerted when things go messily wrong.

NICK NACK BADDY WHACK

This isn't to say that you can skip through the level hammering heads on a whim, though. Bodies left out in the open will be discovered and put guards on high alert during the current mission – instead of tiny messages flashing up, you're now alerted by a picture-in-picture shot of the goons making the grizzly find. Hiding them isn't so simple any more, either – mess, kills now leave blood, which won't kick off a full-fledged alarm but *will* make everyone more alert. Even corpses stashed in deep

PARTY'S OVER: A stray shot ruins all but the most hardcore parties.

CORPSE AND ROBBERS: Sadly, there's no 'nonchalant whistle' button.



STAY SAFE: Weeing, wistful staring and smoking – all bad ideas in 47 country.

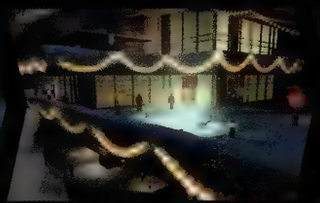
DEATH BY MISADVENTURE

One thing's crucial in new *Hitman* – when the coroner fills out his report, you don't want the words 'repeatedly shot by a big bald man' appearing anywhere. But how on earth do you organise a fatal 'accident' in a party full of potential witnesses? Well, there's always a way. Observe...

POOL PARTY: Out on the veranda of our porn-magnate target's house, there's a party in full swing. And what's this?

JACUZZI LOVER: Yes – it's Johnny Jingle-Mag himself, having a relaxing dip. But it's clearly too crowded for a hit. And that bouncer's probably packing.

HIGH CLASS, NICE GLASS: But wait! Not content to have a massive jacuzzi on a mountain, they've made it out of glass. The fools. The damn fools!



CLIFF I HAD A HAMMER: And it's positioned above a dizzying, vertiginous plummet. Time to find a better vantage point, we reckon...

ROYAL FLUSH: Six hollow-points later, guests swirl to their deaths like fag ends in a bog. Not a court in the land could convict you. Genius.

AN INSIDE JOB

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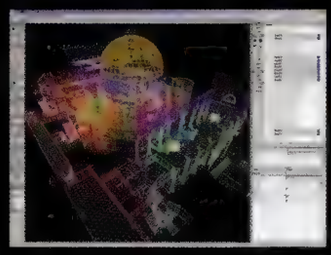


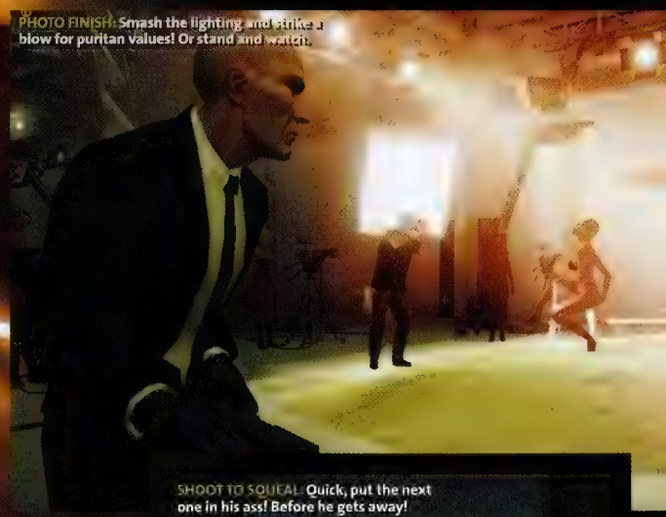
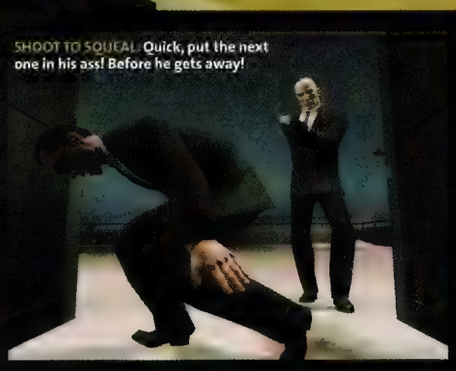
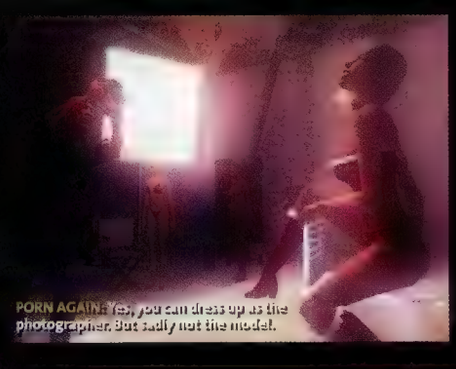


PHOTO FINISH: Smash the lighting, and strike a blow for puritan values! Or stand and watch.

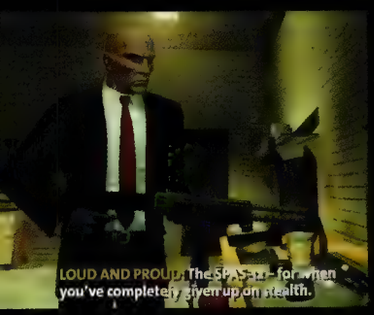


SHOOT TO SQUEAL: Quick, put the next one in his ass! Before he gets away!



PORN AGAIN: Yes, you can dress up as the photographer. But sadly not the model.

HITMAN
BLOOD MONEY



LOUD AND PROUD: The SPAS-12 – for when you've completely given up on stealth.

GAT OUT OF THE BAG: Some security pack Uzis. It's best not to take the risk.

chest freezers or on top of lifts will be discovered in the post-hit investigation, and contribute to the body count that makes up your rep. Only bodies permanently disposed of – thrown in swamps, furnaces or giant mincers, for instance – will keep things on the hush-hush. It's a complex balance – living witnesses contribute to your notoriety, but killing everyone who sees you ramps up the body count that'll be reported to the papers. And this is what keeps bringing us back to *Blood Money*: the sense that, even though you can just dance through shooting everybody, there's always a clever way to stay in the shadows. We just fear what it's going to do to our already-terrifying pub conversation: "Yeah, well, I was just going to drug Santa, but then he saw me so I had to cap him and dress up in his clothes. Killed my main target with a hammer, stuffed his body in the fridge and made it look like suicide. Another pint?"

PSM RECKONS *Well, it's more of the same, albeit tweaked, stroked, polished and ironed until it's as sharp and wrinkle-free as one of 47's tailored suits. The improvements to the AI are subtle but pivotal – the shifts in how the movement works are similarly stress-reducing. What's only noticeable after faffing around for a couple of hours, though, is how much better designed* Blood Money *is – instead of being funnelled down the route to expect you to follow, you're genuinely able to create your own 'moments', making for a much more satisfying experience. And, hey, we make the Santa hat look* good. *On sale May 2006.*

"ONLY BODIES PERMANENTLY DISPOSED OF – IN SWAMPS, FURNACES OR GIANT MINCERS – WILL KEEP THINGS HUSH-HUSH"

HOLD THE FRONT PAGE!

At the end of each level, a newspaper page takes the place of the post-mission stats, reporting what has happened as it appears to the authorities ('accident', 'assassination', 'reprehensible bloodbath', and so on) and printing an identikit photo of 47 based on how many times he's been spotted. Fortunately, it's possible to reverse this process, by bribing police and civilians via a simple interface at the end of each level. Of course, this uses up wodges of cash that might be better employed fitting your guns with silencers, bigger clips or shiny gold triggers. Your call.

MEN AT WORK: More people means it's trickier to get some privacy.

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

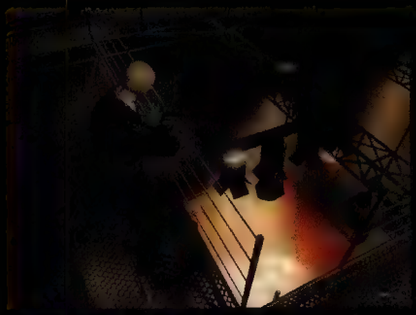
The country: France. The setting: an opera house. The target: a suspected child-smuggler playing the lead in a production of Tosca – a role that involves him getting dramatically mock-executed at the climax of the show. Surely that's going to leave you a window of opportunity? Well, yes, actually. Four of them.

OPTION 1: GET SOME HELP

The best Hitmen don't even do their own dirty work, these days. Case in point: simply sneak into the dressing room between rehearsals, switch the fake gun for a real one and retreat to watch someone else clip your target while you munch popcorn in the dress circle. Bravissimo!

OPTION 2: DRESS UP

Always a favourite. If you haven't got the light-fingered skills necessary to switch the guns, simply whack out the actor who takes the fake shot, steal his clothes and make the bullet yourself. Then exit stage right, cool as Christmas. Easy.



OPTION 3: DO YOUR RESEARCH

Careful reconnaissance pays dividends: in this case, the fact that after the target's mock 'death', there's a crashing orchestral crescendo. Easily loud enough to mask, say, the noise of someone firing a sniper rifle from the lighting gantry and clumping down the back stairs to a waiting sports car.

OPTION 4: WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS...

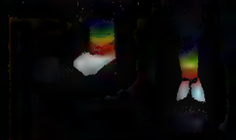
Barge past the guards, cap the target post-haste, take the director hostage and shoot your way free. It's a bit messy, though, and you'll make more front pages than a Cheryl Tweedy thong-flash.

ASSASSINATING THE ASSASSIN

Unfortunately, 47 has a few enemies who'd like nothing better than to see that shiny bald head buried six feet under. Here's a selection of bad guys to keep an eye out for.

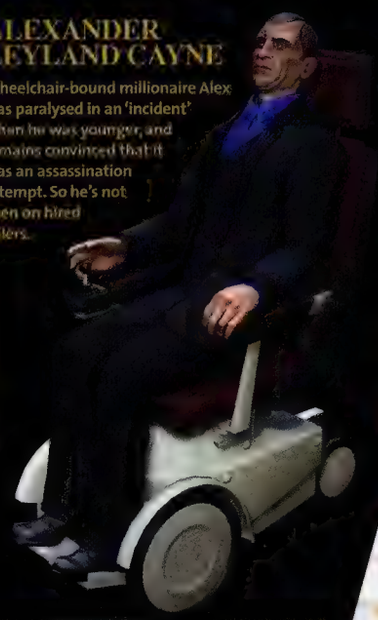
CORKY THE CLOWN

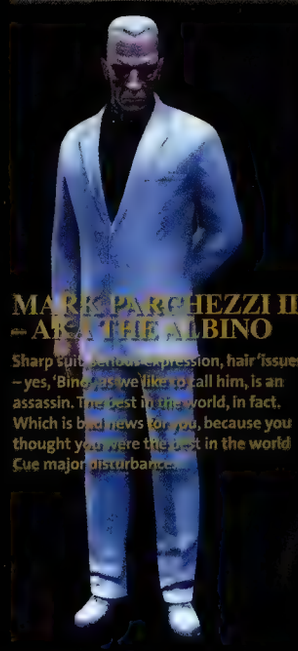
Mr The Clown used to have a car rental business before he hit the bottle and wound up making balloon animals for over privileged heirs. How much of a drunk is he? Let's put it this way: that isn't a fake nose.



ALEXANDER LEYLAND CAYNE

Wheelchair-bound millionaire Alex was paralysed in an 'incident' when he was younger, and remains convinced that it was an assassination attempt. So he's not keen on hired killers.





MARK PARCHEZZI III – AKA THE ALBINO

Sharp suit, perfect expression, hair 'issues' – yes, 'Bino', as we like to call him, is an assassin. The best in the world, in fact. Which is bad news for you, because you thought you were the best in the world. Cue major disturbance...

THE BLACK WIDOW

Margeaux Le Blanc has it all – looks, ginger hair, money and a wealthy fiancee. Her role in the game isn't clear, but given her job title, things aren't looking too good for Johnny No-Shirt.

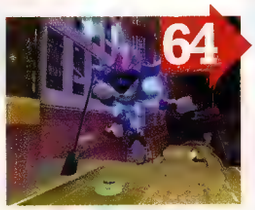
COST CUTTER: A discarded rifle'll cost you a pretty penny. Don't lose it.

"WHOEVER DREAMED THIS UP HASN'T SEEN ANY STREETS BEYOND NORWICH" CRIME LIFE PAGE 59

Reviews

PLAYED TO DESTRUCTION BY PS2 EXPERTS

56 50 CENT: BULLETPROOF
We ask ourselves *21 questions* (Eh? EH?!) about 50 Cent's new game game, including "Why did he just stab that man in the brain?"



64 SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG
The game that has die-hard Sonic fans reeling in terror isn't actually *all that* bad. But still, can we just have normal blue Sonic next time?

68 SOCOM 3: U.S. NAVY SEALS
We *SOCOM* and see (look, it's been a slow month) if Sony's new online wargasm is actually worth a punt if you're broadband-less.

You want more?!
We've so many games you'll whoop for joy. There's *The Incredibles 2* (62), *Shrek Superslam* (63), *Rugby Challenge 2006* (71) and *World Poker Tour* (71). Jump on in!

WELCOME

Disappointment. That's this month's overriding theme. From the startingly average *Prince Of Persia* to the Godawful *50 Cent: Bulletproof*, our expectations have been *shattered*, dragged through the *mud* and, to quoth the Bard, *shat upon*. We're an upbeat group of guys – look inside our brains and you'll see bunny rabbits frolicking in the sunshine, rolling green fields and rivers of chocolate, but it only takes one limp game to drain the river, raze the fields and cull the rabbits. Is a good game really too much to ask?

Apparently so. The best game this month is *Call Of Duty 2* which, although undeniably slick, is very much the same as the first game. After last month, with the amazingly progressive *Shadow Of The Colossus* and the technical marvel of *Liberty City Stories*, this issue is rife with sub-average, below-par dullware. We want our senses *fired*, our souls *stirred* and our brains *consumed* by sparkly, childish *joy*. Not running around war-torn France in a tin hat and pistol whipping belching tramps down a Brooklyn back-alley. That's just predictable.

So come on, developers. Make something special, because we're getting mighty sick of 'satisfactory'. 'All right' just doesn't cut it these days – PS2 doesn't have long left in this world, so help it go out with a bang, eh? You know you want to.

AWARDS

If you see one of these fellas on a review, you know your luck is most definitely 'in'...

PSM2 BRONZE AWARD
Awarded to games that score over 70. A thoroughly enjoyable, solid game and no mistake.

PSM2 SILVER AWARD
Awarded to games that score over 80. A top quality, cracking game is guaranteed.

PSM2 GOLD AWARD
Awarded to games that score over 90. Reserved for true classics – don't expect to see many of these.

PSM2 GAME OF THE MONTH
The best game in the issue. If you're getting only one game this month, get this!

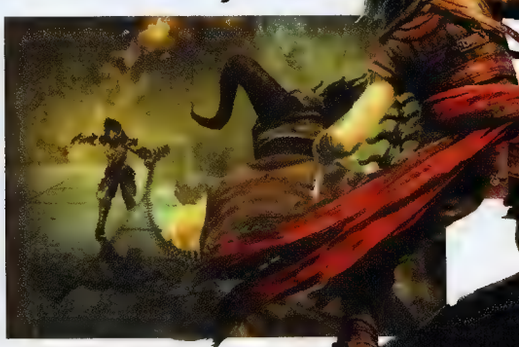
PSM2'S SCORING SYSTEM

PSM2 is 100% editorially independent and we mark hard, but fair. We know you want buying advice you can trust and that's why when you see a game with a good score from PSM2 on the box, you can guarantee it's going to be worth the price. Marked precisely out of 100 rather than "three stars out of five", here's what those scores mean:

0-29	Shoddy nonsense. If you see a game with a score below 30, move away from the shelf.
30-49	Maybe some fun to be had but the gameplay and design are sure to be seriously flawed.
50-69	No major faults. This is fine for die-hard fans of the genre or if you spot it going cheap.
70-84	Now we're talking. An entertaining game that only just misses out on being special.
85-89	Get your wallet out! A game in this tight scoring band will be a near-classic.
90+	Unmissable. Essential. Superb. Classic. If you're a real gamer, you will need this game.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES

Two thrones? Well, the new Prince deserves a royal flush.



VS

PLAYING PS2 LONGER, HARDER, FASTER

50 TRUE CRIME: NEW YORK CITY

Fight, shoot and drive your way through the rotten core of the Big Apple in this big-budget sequel.

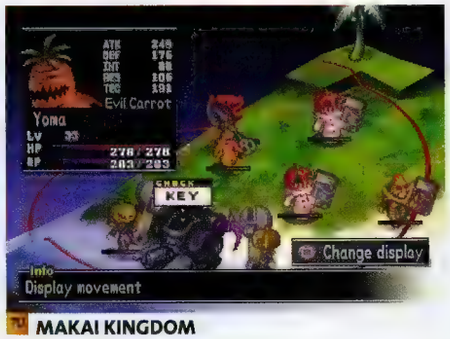
CRASH TAG TEAM RACING

EVIL DEAD REGENERATION

"CALL OF DUTY 2 IS THE GAMING EQUIVALENT OF ALL YOUR SYNAPSES EXPLODING"

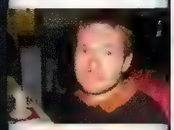
CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE PAGE 52

DEVIL KINGS



MAKAI KINGDOM

►DANIEL GRIFFITHS
Dan is convinced that in a past life, he was a woman called Doris. Sometimes he has harrowing 'psychic flashbacks' and finds himself wandering around the office in a dress. Or so he says.

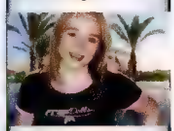


►DANIEL DAWKINS
This month, with a head full of *Shadow Of The Colossus*, Dan built a giant wicker effigy, put some classical music on his iPod and spent the weekend clambering around its body.

►NATHAN IRVINE
Nathan was arrested this month for murdering two prostitutes and setting fire to a car... in *GTA* that is. Ho ho! Well, actually, it wasn't and he's now facing life in prison.

►ANDREW KELLY
Andy is the world's greatest man. He's funny, intelligent, sexy, a brilliant writer and his apartment smells like rich mahogany. We love him. He's the– *[Shut up Andy. Idiot. – Ed]*

►DAVID COOK
Dave has been suffering from a mystery illness this month. He swears it's a cold, but we think he's just suffering an extended hangover from one of his daily vodka binges.



►KIRSTEN KEARNEY
Andy's oft-derided plan to make a robot lady came to fruition this month. But we don't think Flakon 3-7 (a cereal packet with foil lips) will ever kiss Kirsten. Sorry Andy.

PS2 REVIEWS THIS ISSUE

HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE

GAMES

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Call of Duty 2: Big Red One pg52
Crash Tag Team Racing pg54
50 Cent: Bulletproof pg56
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Shrek SuperSlam pg63
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DVDS

War Of The Worlds pg80
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Mr & Mrs Smith pg81
The 40 Year Old Virgin pg81

THE TRUTH

Every game ever reviewed! pg90

SanDisk — PSM2 use only Sandisk Memory Stick Pro Duo cards in their PSPs.

U.S.Robotics — PSM2 plays online wirelessly with US Robotics hardware

DETAILS
Developer: Ubisoft
Publisher: Ubisoft
Players: 1
Memory Save: 121kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

QUESTION...
I like the look of Babylon and I'm thinking of going there for my hols, but I was wondering – did anyone else famous ever come from there besides the Prince himself?

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"The Greeks placed empty thrones in Royal palaces, so that the gods could have somewhere fitting to sit if they happened to be present."

GAMEFAX
Sequel
Action
Platformer
Hard

TRIVBURST
- *The Two Thrones* is the most unfortunate game name since the notorious *Ring Of Red*.
- Persia is now called Iran, but *Prince Of Iran* isn't alliterative.

"TWO THRONES. TWO PRINCES. TOO MUCH OF THE SAME OLD STUFF"

PRINCE OF PERSIA THE TWO THRONES

Regal new thriller, bog-standard adventure or caught between two stools? Is there no lavatorial pun we won't stoop to as we attempt to flush out the truth?

All Prince Charles has to do is shake hands and insult buildings, but it wasn't always so simple for royalty. Since the series began, the Prince Of Persia has been getting himself into more and more trouble – and now, for this third instalment, nearly everything's on fire, Babylon's collapsing and his own evil alter-ego keeps talking to him. In his head. And it's being rude. Still, at least he hasn't married anyone inappropriate.

The Two Thrones squashes together the best elements of the first two games to create the ultimate *POP* experience – or at least, that's the theory. The first game had sublimely acrobatic platforming but truly wearisome combat, the second had better fighting but relied on it too much. It also went too heavily into faddishly 'dark and gritty' imagery that was more akin to a grumpy teenager's bedroom than the End Times.

So here the Prince is back in Babylon, accompanied by period-style music rather than overpolished US angst rock and, notably, not dressed in black. Well, not always. That second throne, as you probably know, is for the Dark Prince. At set times our hero's rage (the story is more hokey and complex than ever) transforms him into a goth pop star with a completely new set of abilities. Well, we say completely...

"AT TIMES, THE PRINCE TRANSFORMS INTO A GOTH POP STAR WITH NEW ABILITIES"

CHAIN REACTION

He's got a chain. With this chain (the Daggertail) he can swing across wider gaps than normal, and extend wall-runs to twice th[illegible] also pull switches fr[illegible] with typical *POP* styl[illegible] every move either incarnation makes is a mixture of grace and art – but in the end it's of little consequence. Why? The level design. Exactly the thing Prince Charles complains about whenever he goes to the south bank, by coincidence.

Like Heineken, the Dark Prince can reach places the others can't, but the normal Prince doesn't go through the same locations as the Dark Prince – so there's no comparison. The Dark Prince's levels are created especially for his moves, so progress through them feels just the same as normal. It's not as if there's extra benefit to making use of the chain... had we been back in familiar areas, now able to use routes we'd previously only eyed jealously as the normal

PSM2 BRONZE AWARD

The MON£Y $HOT
A man with spikes is about to die, violently. That might sound bad, but at least we're out in the fresh air doing some exercise.

A THRONE IN THE DARK

Basically, the Dark Prince is constantly dying. All the time you're doing anything but delivering the killing blow, your health is ebbing away. This leads to some embarrassing – not to say annoying – moments where you just drop dead on the spot from what looks like a heart attack. The only other source of health is from smashing boxes and amphoras. Breaking off from a tough multi-guard rumble to stab a bit of pottery may look stupid, but it might just save your life. Run out of crockery, get stuck or stop killing, and it'll be fatal.

PULL THE CHAIN: **It's called *The Two Thrones*, it's got a chain and it's sh... should have been better than this. Tut.**

TOP 5 PERSIAN INVENTIONS

- Hanging gardens
- Persian cats
- The rug
- Iran
- Suicide bombers

GAMEPIE

30% Running on walls.
35% Avoiding traps.
25% Cursing combat.
10% Reloading.

ANSWER

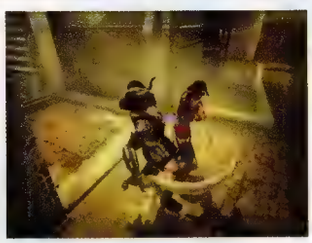
Yes! Sort of. Yossarian, the hero of Joseph Heller's famous novel Catch-22, was an Assyrian. Wow, eh?

FLAMEPROOF NIGHTIE: He looks suitably tortured and his animations are brilliant, but does the Dark Prince make a difference? No.

FINDING VAULT: Stealthy new Speed Kills work well, but only because normal combat is still so awkward.

LORD OF THE DANCE: Sometimes, the Prince and his crew just want to get down and shake their asses wildstyle.

CARTS AND MINDS: The chariot sections are great fun due to their runaway nature and constant fighting.



Prince, it would have been different. As it is, the Dark Prince's 'new moves' are little more than an alternative animation.

Of course, he can fight with the chain as well, and it gives him a short-range melee capability. It's a bit of a shame, then, that it's a liability as often as it is a help. *The Two Thrones* still hasn't solved the sluggish animation queuing that's so damaging in combat – more on this in a minute – and the chain-spinning move is worse than anything. It takes ages for him to stop spinning it, even after you've stopped pressing the button, leaving you unable to launch any other attack just when you most need to.

So, beautiful though these animations are, they can – and do – get you killed. The enemies still like to surround you, and taking a hit invokes a stuck-to-the-spot recoil that lasts just long enough for Mr Bad Guy – or the one behind you – to hit you again, triggering the same recoil. Again. So he hits you, and the same thing happens... you can easily lose half your health this way before any control is finally returned to you. It wasn't fun in the first or second game and it isn't here either.

And it gets even less fun as you progress, because *The Two Thrones* seems to build on its faults as if the designers were pushing up faders on a mixing desk. We loved the first few hours, but a combination of several factors means it really does start to punish you after that. For one thing, the save points are badly – and often widely – placed, while the checkpoints in between are lost if you turn off the machine. Why can't it just autosave at the checkpoints?

HARD TO BEAT

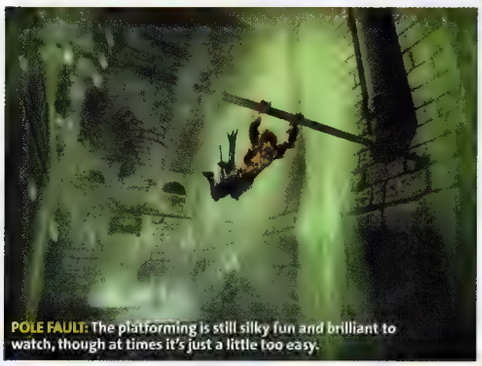
In between many of these save havens lie sudden difficulty spikes and near-relentless, health-draining mass combat that's followed with... more combat. And then, perhaps on the fifth time through – complete with unskippable cut-scenes and 'spontaneous' dialogue you now know and loathe by heart – you'll find *that's* followed by some platforming over collapsing structures where there's not even time to look before you leap. If such sections were designed specifically to drain your health, your time-rewinding 'Sand

PIMP MY CHARIOT

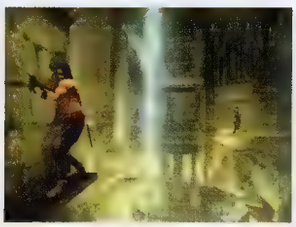
The chariot racing is inspired – or, more accurately, the way it's been done is inspired. Instead of loading a separate arena and telling us to do, say, three laps and earn money, gain 'spect, beat some random bad guy or whatever, we're treated to good-old Hollywood chases. There's no brake and no throttle, leaving you to desperately steer out of harm's way in an appropriately desperate, semi-controlled fashion. At times, large objects roll or fall into the your path, and to make avoiding them even harder, other charioteers and various guards leap onto your cart and simply demand to be stabbed until they fall off. It's only polite to oblige.

PONY EXPRESS: The chasing charioteers can be shoved head on into walls to 'discourage' them from chasing any more.

BIG BONED: Bosses, and particularly big fat bosses, need to be stabbed in the eyes – or whatever their weak spot is.



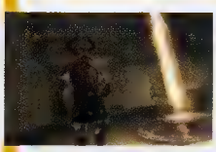
POLE FAULT: The platforming is still silky fun and brilliant to watch, though at times it's just a little too easy.

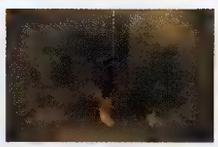


SPEED KILLS! SO SLOW DOWN A LITTLE BIT

The Prince's new stealth 'speed kills' are an important invention, not least because they save you the annoying hassle of fighting the normal way. The sneakiness of dropping onto a guard's head and stabbing all his organs at once is highly satisfying, and the brief, colour-drained slo-mo that's the prompt for you to react is impressively subtle – much better than a flashing button icon. A quick scan often reveals a 'stealthy' path to above or behind an enemy, yet many leave you so blatantly obvious it's impossible to believe in them. Dangling in broad daylight from a chain feet above a patrol's heads is just daft. Surely they're just ignoring it 'cos they feel sorry for you?

RUTHLESS ON THE ROOFTOP: Approaching unaware guards sees the Prince crouch and automatically step softly.





STAB-SOLUTELY LOVELY: Speed Kills look great – and very painful. Mistimed presses see you overpowered instantly, though.

"THE FLAWS ARE THE SAME THAT THE SERIES HAS BORNE SINCE THE START – WE CAN'T FORGIVE THEM"

Tanks' and your patience, they couldn't have been done better. Just don't turn it off in frustration. Then you'll lose the checkpoint and have to go right back to the last save.

In its defence, we did eventually realise it was possible to run right past a lot of the enemies and escape without ten minutes of repetitive button mashing. Also, both Princes can, at times, use the new 'Speed Kill' system to creep past unseen without fighting at all, which saves having them call for backup. We did this as much as possible, and frankly it improves the game, though not because the stealth is good – it's almost embarrassingly basic at times – but because it let us get back to dangling off ledges.

The new moves make exploration and trap-running even more enjoyable, again largely because of the quality of the animations. You can now support yourself in narrow 'chimneys' of facing walls, dangle from your dagger on appropriate ornaments, jump diagonally from flapping windows and climb ropes and chains. The traps are more complex too, featuring rows of arrow-spitting tubes, spinning discs and enormous crushing blocks – it's somewhat reminiscent, ironically, of *Tomb Raider*. Ironic because the latest *TR* movies show Lara Croft to have been somewhat 'influenced' by *Prince Of Persia*...

If there is a flaw in the platforming aspects of *The Two Thrones*, it's that at times it's too easy. You can jump 15 feet from one thin beam to another while four stories up, for instance, simply by pressing one button. You don't even need to look where you're going. Consequently many of the 'quick, run!' sections where everything's collapsing are welcome, despite how annoying the repeat-miles-of-it checkpoint punishments can be if you fail. Knowing the pillar or ledge you're clinging to is about to tumble into the abyss adds a sense of danger that's too often lacking elsewhere. Even having to 'grab' with a well-timed button press would add a bit of challenge.

The biggest problem, though, is that *The Two Thrones'* flaws are the same that this series has borne since the beginning. We can't forgive them this far down the line; will those who've willingly overlooked them before continue to do so? There's no denying *Prince Of Persia* still has far more charm than most, and can provide some elegant, highly entertaining moments. But it'll help if you're the patient sort. Very patient. **Steve Williams**

■ The Prince *sits on his thrones from December 9th.*

DOGS OF FLAW: They look suitably evil, but in the end they're just annoying.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Great, if simple platforming. – Horrible combat, punishing checkpoints.	+ Very attractive with great animation. – Often juddery, sometimes terribly so.	+ Some decent period music. – Some terrible voice acting.

LIFESPAN

There's much to admire as you play through, but at times it seems built to make you give up.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
WARRIOR WITHIN

IT'S WORSE THAN...
GOD OF WAR

POP: T2T is an attractive, atmospheric platformer with fighting that ranges from basic to infuriating. Too many flaws linger from the start of the series to be forgiven.

77

INFOSTRIP

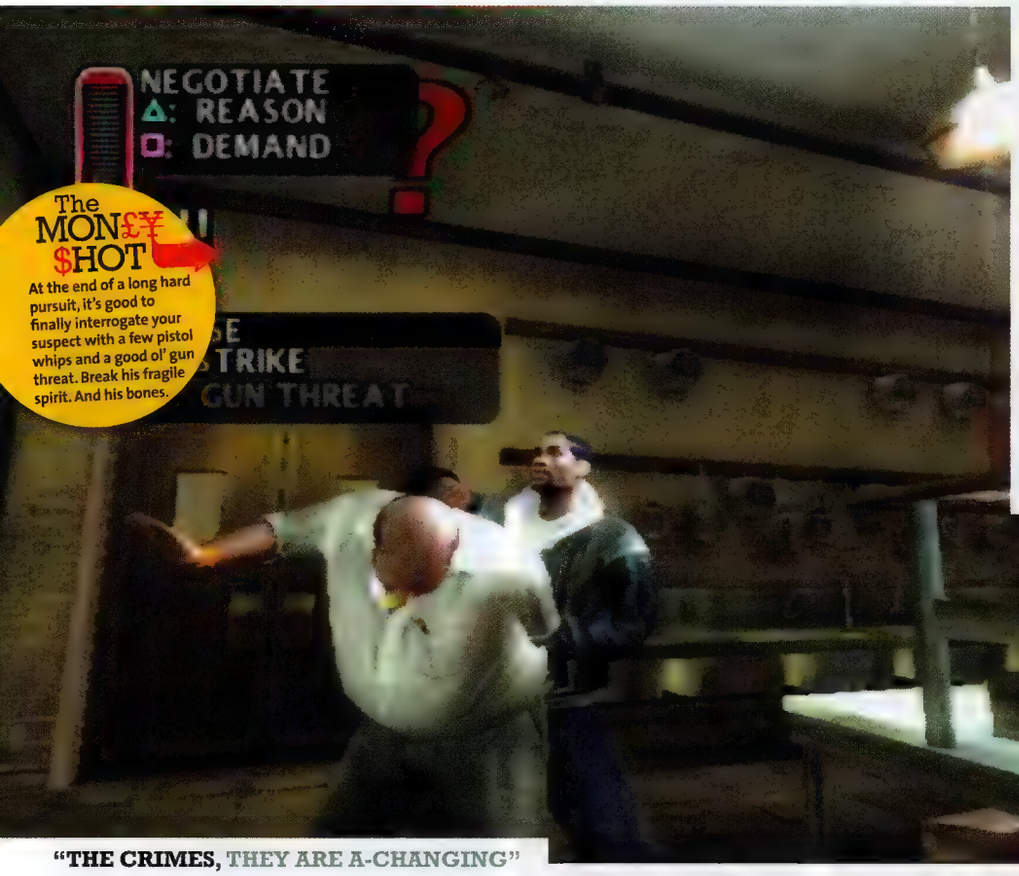
DETAILS
Developer: Luxoflux
Publisher: Activision
Players: 1
Memory Save: 347kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

QUESTION...
Laurence Fishburne and Christopher Walken have both lent their voices to videogames before, but who's appeared on the most soundtracks?

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"Crime author Robert Crais filed a lawsuit claiming that the first *True Crime's* cop, Nick Kang, was a rip-off of his character, Elvis Cole. He dropped the case."

GAMEFAX
Realistic | Violent
GTA Copy | Stupid

TRIVBURST
- Cruise the entirely mapped streets of the USA's most famous city, New York.
- Interrogate suspects with pistol whips.
- Choose your path as a good/bent copper.



The MON£Y $HOT
At the end of a long hard pursuit, it's good to finally interrogate your suspect with a few pistol whips and a good ol' gun threat. Break his fragile spirit. And his bones.

SWING WHEN YOU'RE WINNING: Leave your gun holstered and indulge in some skull-cracking fights instead.

ROAD SIGN OF THE TIMES: Apprehend scumbags then make them talk with the brute force interrogation.

"THE CRIMES, THEY ARE A-CHANGING"

TRUE CRIME NEW YORK CITY

How do you judge a crime game in a free-roaming city without mentioning *San Andreas*? Erm, you don't...

Is it better than *San Andreas*? No. Not even almost. And, let's be honest, nobody expected it to be. *True Crime: New York City* may have a sprawling landscape and feature loads of *GTA* traits like a living city, jacking cars and the like, but this is where the similarities end. Regardless of all the right ingredients being thrown into the mix, there's something seriously wrong with it. So what's wrong? Simply put, the gaming mechanics are a bit crap. Yep, it's all very well dressing up the package with stunning visuals and a solid soundtrack – including PSM2 favourites Interpol, Jay-Z and the Blue Oyster Cult. But when the cars handle like shopping trollies on ice and some of the fight animations – although solid in places – see you float through walls like Casper the brawling ghost, it's disappointing to say the least. But take another bite of the Big Apple and you'll find that there are some tasty touches here too.

But – glitches aside – *True Crime: NYC* has enormous depth and diversity (see Crime's Variety) to get stuck into. For example, the story – while not exactly award-winning stuff – is a fantastic roller-

PSM2 BRONZE AWARD

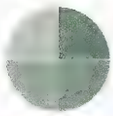
WU-SHU BELIEVE IT?

As well as being able to pick up almost any object (dumb-bells, frying pans and shovels) and use it as a bludgeoning tool, you can also pay an instructor to teach you new moves and fighting styles. There's your basic brawling, Wu-Shu and Karate to learn, among others. And when the fighting sequences are at their best they look stunning and feel solid as you smash a guy to the floor with a flurry of punches and kicks.

Lost limbs: And now down to a single gun. Even in this stance, it also comes packed with ass-kicking moves. Brilliant.

TOP 5 CITIES IN GAMES

- San Fierro – *San Andreas*
- New York – *True Crime*
- London – *The Getaway*
- Dodge – *Gun*
- Springfield – *Simpsons Hit and Run*



GAMEPIE

25% Cruising New York.
25% Gunning down perps.
25% Shooting up interiors.
25% Checking out monuments.

ANSWER

It's Mr Fishburne, with four games under his belt to Chris Walken's two. Although three of those games were Matrix games...

DE-BUGGING: Is it real or are these alien creature in Lucas's head. You're going to have to play to find out.

CLOTHES LINE: Take a trip to the station and you can dress Marcus in all sorts of 'street' wear, like this ensemble.

WHEELIE FUN: Well not really, but the bikes are probably the quickest mode of transport.

CRIME'S VARIETY

ENVIRONMENTAL KILLS!

FIGHT CLUB-STYLE BRAWLING!

If there's one thing that *True Crime: NYC* delivers by the barrel-load, its variety. One minute you're chasing a perp through Central Park and the next you're having a rooftop gunfight against a bloke with a rocket-launcher. Jeez, there's literally new stuff happening around every crime-ridden corner. Check out these other things too...

MENTAL HOSPITAL BREAKOUTS!

CHASING BUTCH WOMEN!

coaster tale of thug-turns-cop action and keeps you hooked as you follow Marcus Reed's uprising. Along the way, you'll notice the moral decisions of *True Crime: Streets Of LA* are back, and this time they affect your good/bad cop rating with aplomb. So rewarding is the tweaked system that you now get to feel the benefits of your actions. Like handing in narcotics at your local police precinct following a spot of frisking (◎ when standing behind a criminal) or a drugs bust will earn you actual promotions and increase your wages, allowing you to buy guns and cars. Nice. But if you fancy being a bad cop and selling the drugs, then you'll be able to buy your arms from a black market dealer. It's up to you.

NEW YORK CITY STORIES

Thankfully, the game doesn't squander the New York setting. NYC looks gritty, as the rain and wind lashes bits of trash debris around. Steam plumes from sewer covers, famous landmarks are all present and correct (like the Statue of Liberty and Central Park) and, most importantly, you can enter the buildings. The first time you burst into the hotel room of a bunch of disruptive rock stars, it's a tough choice between painting the walls with their claret, just to 'sort things out' quickly or merely hitting SELECT to fire off a warning shot and forcing them to surrender. (We chose the first option, by the way.) But while there are loads of interiors that splinter into fragments as you tear up the place, there's a serious problem with the whole collision detection. People walk through closed doors and the stealth missions are nigh on impossible to complete undetected because it's tricky to walk around corners without stumbling into the view of your assailant.

"YOU CHASE A FLEEING CRIM AND A WALL OF PEOPLE STAND IN YOUR WAY"

Out on the streets it's not much better. Pedestrians wander about the city aimlessly – bumping into each other and generally getting in the way. It's not great when you're chasing down a fleeing criminal only for a wall of people to stand across your path like the back line of the England rugby team. We can't recount the amount of times we've un-holstered our side arm and ripped through civilians just to stop a petty thug in his tracks. Messy. But because of the hindrance and Marcus's lack of pace, everyday tasks become tedious and drawn out. Even the vehicles aren't much better. We can all recall the first time we ripped through Vice City on a PCJ 600. Well don't expect the same sort of adrenaline rush with *True Crime: NYC*'s motorbikes. They're slow, the handling is too light and you can send lampposts spinning into the air as you smash through them. While the motorbikes are poor, they're not nearly as clumsy as driving a car. Clipping a vehicle means your motor becomes uncontrollable and pings off every other car in sight. And why are they so slow? It's quicker to board the subway or take a cab to your destination. It's a shame really.

So although *True Crime: NYC* manages to be marginally better than the original thanks to a decent storyline, plenty of gameplay variety and a more likeable lead man and has voice talent from Laurence Fishburne and Christopher Walken, with a little more TLC it could've been something really special. But it isn't. **Nathan Irvine**

■ True Crime NYC *is whoopin' ass now.*

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Fast-paced and ever changing action. – But the game mechanics are flawed.	+ A beautifully recreated New York. – Frame-rate and draw distance issues.	+ A varied soundtrack of quality tunes. – Marcus's dialogue is repetitive.

LIFESPAN

If you don't mind repeating the same set of sub-missions then there's plenty to do. The main story is weighty enough as well.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
TRUE CRIME: L.A.

IT'S WORSE THAN...
GTA: SAN ANDREAS

A decent return, but it feels like it should've spent a few more months being finished. Entertaining, but basically a poor man's *GTA*.

71

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Treyarch
Publisher: Activision
Players: 1-16 online
Memory Save: 274kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: Yes

QUESTION...
What's all this 'big red one' stuff? A big red what? Nose? Old chap? Tell me!

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"None of the barrels in *Call Of Duty 2* explode. None of them! It's a revolution in the first-person shooter genre. Nearly."

GAMEFAX
FPS
War
Sequel
Network Play

TRIVBURST
- Take the troops of the Big Red One across Africa, Russia, Sicily and more.
- Massive online mode for up to 16 players.
- Lots of different vehicles as well as on-foot sections.

PSM2 SILVER AWARD

The MON£Y $HOT
Just look how beautiful it all is – those explosions on the rooftops, the bullets splashing in the water... graphically, it's astounding.

ICE TO SEE YOU... This is the icy Russian winter. The game plays no different in the snow, but it looks nice.

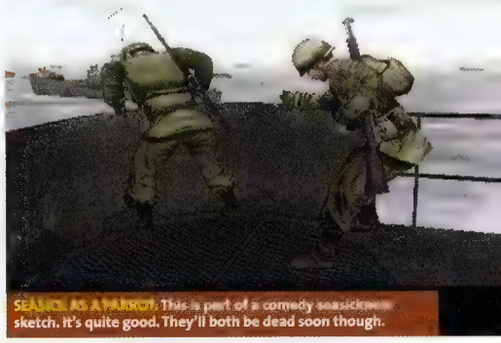
ALL WRITE NOW

In terms of scriptwriting, *Call Of Duty 2* is the most gloriously clichéd thing in the book. "Hey," pipes up one of your men. "Looks like I might get out of this war alive after all!" A split-second later, a German shoots him in the back of the head. Another dies while dismantling a barricade. "Viiic!" hollers his mate. "Nooo! Those Nazi bastards!" Cue weepy war-time theme. It's no Schindler's List but... sniff... poor Vic. Send a ham to his widow, Sarge.

"SCORING CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN A BIG RED ONE"

CALL OF DUTY 2 BIG RED ONE

The greatest war game on PS2 gets an equally-great sequel. But can we resist making jokes about its subtitle?



SEARCH AS A HARROT. This is part of a comedy seasickness sketch. It's quite good. They'll both be dead soon though.

There are times while playing *Call Of Duty 2* that you'd be forgiven for thinking the apocalypse was happening around you. Scampering across a Sicilian beach, you'll be ducking, diving and weaving as seemingly everyone in the world takes pot-shots at your ass. Explosions batter your ears and flames can be seen all around you. Then suddenly machine gun bullets fly past your face. Blasted gun emplacements. BANG! What was that? Shit – a massive bloody tank. No – *two* massive bloody tanks. This is madness! Over the whistling gunfire, you suddenly hear the noise of engines in the sky and... WHUMPH! A passing airstrike just dropped a load of bombs. They just about missed you, though, but a couple of your lads are already dead. And you won't be far behind.

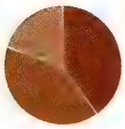
Call Of Duty 2, even more so than its prequel, is built around a structure of some rather excellent first-person-shooty bits which then lead into some of the most spectacular set-pieces that PS2 has ever played host to. Three of the finest can be seen in the box on the next page, but they're almost all up there with the most heart-pumping examples in games and show up *Medal Of Honor: European Assault* for the shoddy lump it is. (Except, that is, for the one in which you're on a plane and dropping bombs on oil tanks, which is clunky and slower than a Sunday afternoon watching Singing In The Rain round at your grandma's.)

"MASSIVELY ATMOSPHERIC – BIG RED ONE COMES CLOSER THAN ANY OTHER GAME TO REALLY FEELING LIKE WAR"

Just like its prequel, *Big Red One* – named after the squad that'll be taking on campaigns in Africa, Sicily, France and Russia in the game – is a far cry from the tactics-heavy slow-paced approach of the slew of other war games such as *Full Spectrum Warrior* and *Brothers In Arms*. It's far more of a simple first-person shooter and all the better for it. So you'll find yourself marauding through bomb-shattered cities, merrily blazing lead into any passing Nazis with a selection of guns that, although great fun to use, occasionally seem a little more advanced than anything you might have expected to be employed in World

TOP 5 BIG RED THINGS

- A postbox.
- An autumn sunset.
- A really, really big rose.
- A tomato soup lake.
- Phil Mitchell.



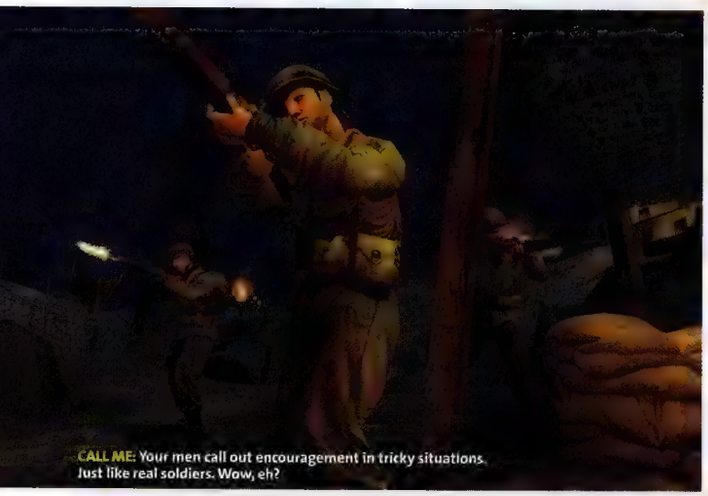
GAMEPIE

40% Astonishing explosions.
40% Spectacular set-pieces.
20% Thinking of smutty 'Big Red One' puns.

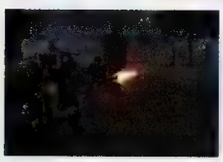
ANSWER

The title refers to the nickname of the First Infantry Division in the US army. They wore a patch with a red '1' on it.

SICILY-LIVERED: A Sicilian village reduced to rubble. There are a lot of levels set here.



CALL ME: Your men call out encouragement in tricky situations. Just like real soldiers. Wow, eh?



War 2. You'll be able to take down an enemy with a single shot while he's at the other side of a huge city square, crouching behind a wall with only his nose showing. *CoD2* wants you to win, you see, which is its only real flaw – it can be just too easy, thanks, mainly to the obscene amount of health packs scattered about (just like real war, see) coupled with the generously regular checkpoints. As such, it's about two-thirds of the way through the game before you even break sweat, which wasn't an accusation that could be levelled at the first *Call Of Duty*.

I'M SO EXCITED

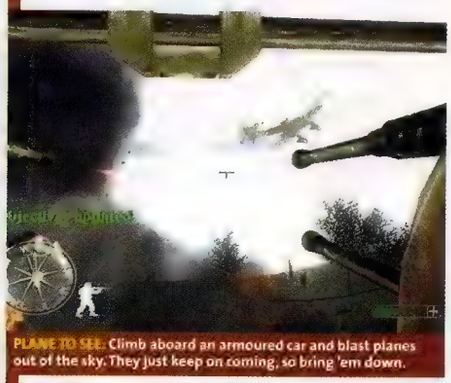
But having said that, even when you're engaged in a cat-and-mouse gun battle with an enemy, with you both popping up from behind rubble to take pot-shots at each other, *Big Red One* is rarely less than massively exciting, what with all the explosions and shouts of fear or encouragement coming from your squad-mates. It looks amazing too, with a massive draw distance. In terms of eye candy, this is a box of the finest Belgian chocolates compared to, say, *European Assault*'s melted back-pocketed packet of M&Ms. It's all massively atmospheric and comes closer than any other game has to *feeling like war*. Not that we'd know what war feels like, because we're big girls, faint at the mere idea of conscription and only just about grasp which end of a gun actually goes bang.

So, *Call Of Duty 2*, then. It's great, basically, and the best war game on PS2. A tiny bit easy, perhaps, and it hasn't made any great leaps on from the first game – hence a marginally lower mark than last time – but in terms of atmosphere, polish and all-round *fun*, it's (bar a couple of peculiarly humdrum levels in the early stages) a sheer joy to play. If you're after something with loads of tactical depth, this might not be the (big red) one for you. For those who just want an all-out shooter, however, this is one of the finest. **David Cook**

■ *Grab hold of your* Big Red One *right now.*

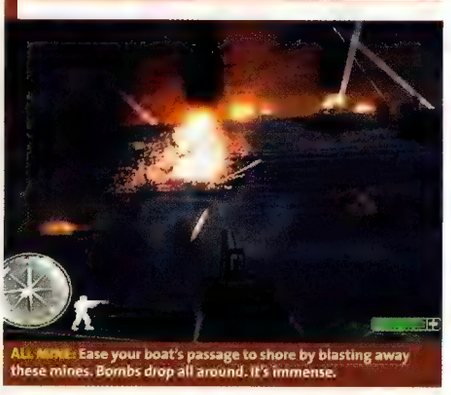
GAME, SET-PIECE AND MATCH

Those set-pieces, then. Visually, they're amazing, from planes hurtling past dropping bombs, causing massive explosions to etch across your screen, to the sea missions, in which you can nearly *taste* the salt. But they're just as storming to play – take down a tanks with a bazooka. Jump on board a plane and be a tailgunner. Blast away mines and guide your boat to shore as the ocean erupts around you. They're full of gobsmacking moments.

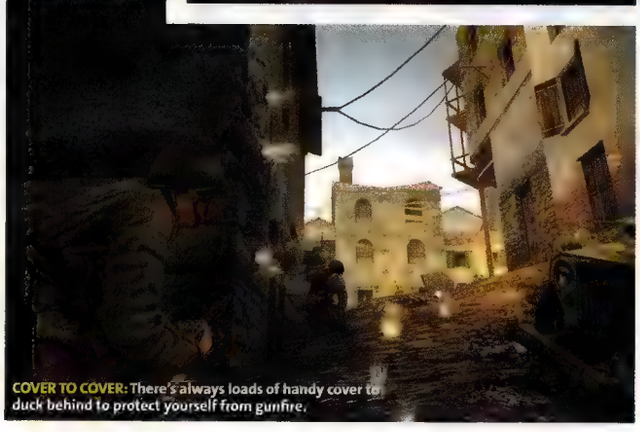


PLANE TO SEE: Climb aboard an armoured car and blast planes out of the sky. They just keep on coming, so bring 'em down.

YOU CAN TANK ON IT: Trundle around in big tanks and blast other tanks into a million flaming shards. It makes you feel hard.



ALL MINES: Ease your boat's passage to shore by blasting away these mines. Bombs drop all around. It's immense.



COVER TO COVER: There's always loads of handy cover to duck behind to protect yourself from gunfire.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ It's like being in a war. But without trenchfoot. – A tad too easy, maybe, but little to moan about.	+ Superb. PS2 just keeps getting better. – Occasionally, a little dark. But not often.	+ The most atmospheric audio in any PS2 game ever. Really. – Nothing wrong here..

LIFESPAN

A tad too straightforward, but a bit lengthier than last time out, with a few unlockables and a good multi-player mode.

MINUTES ... YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
CALL OF DUTY

IT'S WORSE THAN...
TIMESPLITTERS 2

Not quite as nails as before, yet even more exciting, *Big Red One* is the gaming equivalent of your synapses combusting. And that can only ever be a good thing.

86

INFOSTRIP

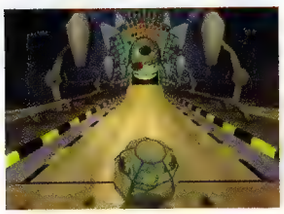
DETAILS
Developer: Radical
Publisher: Vivendi
Players: 1-4
Memory Save: 876kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

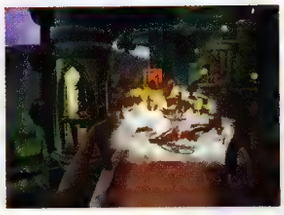
PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer
"The lead singer from bizarre '80s rock outfit Devo did the music for the first *Crash Bandicoot* game. Whip it!"

GAMEPIE
40% Hating Crash.
20% Going Cortex instead.
20% Unlocking new hats.
20% Platforming.

GAMEFAX
Driving
Platformer
Sequel
Funny

TRIVBURST
- Loads of characters including Crash and Coco.
- Mixes platforming and kart racing sections.
- Combine with other karts by 'clashing'.





CLASH IN THE PAN

Here's the clashing system in all its visually-stunning glory. It's a really nice effect and actually quite useful. But it does seem wrong teaming Crash up with his mortal enemy, Neo Cortex. Or are we just being big stupid babies?

The MON£¥ $HOT
Things can get quite frantic and exciting when a whole group of you are jostling for position. Clashing, weapons... complete chaos.

ICE TO SEE YOU: Yes, there's an ice level. There's also a lava level. And a desert level. Hardly original, we know...

PSM2 BRONZE AWARD

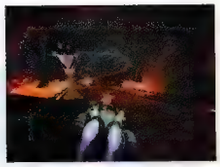
"CRASH, WE ONLY HAVE 14 HOURS TO ~~SAVE THE EARTH~~ GO KARTING"

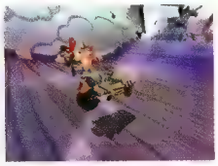
CRASH TAG TEAM RACING

The worst character in the world stars in... well, a surprisingly good kart racer, actually.

Before we begin, we want to make something clear – we hate Crash Bandicoot. We hate his stupid face, we hate his stupid laugh and we hate his stupid trousers. In fact, we're giving *Tag Team Racing* a point less than we strictly should simply because we have to look at his hideous face as we play it. But, despite this, his game is actually good. It's not brilliant, but it's fun and chock-full of stuff to do. Damn him.

Y'see, while it's primarily a kart racing game, it's also a fairly accomplished platformer. It's hardly on par with *Ratchet & Clank*, but it's perfectly solid and there are dozens of secrets and characters dotted around. Each level serves as a 'hub' for the game's tracks, so you have to explore 'platforming land' and do things that'll unlock courses in 'racing land'. Does that even make any sense? Well, it will when you actually play the game. It works exceedingly well and both sections blend together – neither feels clumsily tacked-on just to make the back of the box sound more interesting.





TOP OF THE CLASH

The racing itself is fairly standard stuff, although its big thing, the 'clashing' system, is pretty entertaining. Scream up behind another character's kart and press △ to clash with them, which basically means both your cars merge to form one giant supercar. This lets someone man the guns while the other person drives, which is an excellent idea. Remember to ditch the other half before the finishing line though or you'll share first place with them, which just won't do. As well as regular races, there's also a battle mode, a stunt arena and a few others. These don't feel as well-rounded as the racing, but at least they tried, eh?

The range of characters on offer is varied, if a little modest. They're all from the *Crash* universe and include the bandicoot's nemesis Neo Cortex, his 'love interest' Coco and some redneck possum thing called Pasadena. You can spend coins collected in the game's platforming sections on new costumes and unlock new cars by performing side-missions and collecting hidden power crystals.

There are dozens of good ideas at play in *Tag Team Racing*, but the shameful truth is, everything falls short of the mark. It's never truly inspiring and although it's playable, it never feels essential. It's simply pleasant fun, but it won't hold your interest too long. So think hard before you buy it. **Andy Kelly**

■ Crash Tag Team Racing *is oot reet nah.*

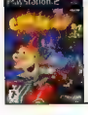
PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Uncomplicated, but definitely enjoyable. – Never feels quite as good as its rivals.	+ Colourful and full of character. – Crash Bandicoot himself *always* looks rubbish.	+ Some genuinely funny scripting... – ...and some genuinely awful acting.

LIFESPAN
There are scores of vehicles, hidden short-cuts, tracks and costumes to unlock, so if you're a completist, expect to be playing for a while.
MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
CYCLONE CIRCUS

IT'S WORSE THAN...
JAK X



Good but never great, *Tag Team Racing* is an accomplished cartoon racer that only just falls short of being excellent. It is, however, one of PS2's few kart games...

74

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INFOSTRIP

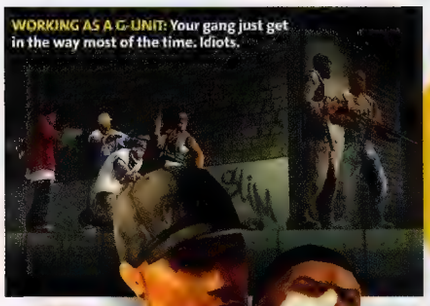
DETAILS
Developer: Genuine Games
Publisher: Vivendi
Players: 1
Memory Save: 342kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

QUESTION...
Can I hear the lustrous voice of 50 Cent on any other hip-hop albums?

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"Among 50's rivals are Shyne, Ja Rule, Jadakiss, Nas, Joe Budden, Yukmouth and Fat Joe. He's also fallen out with his former protegé, The Game."

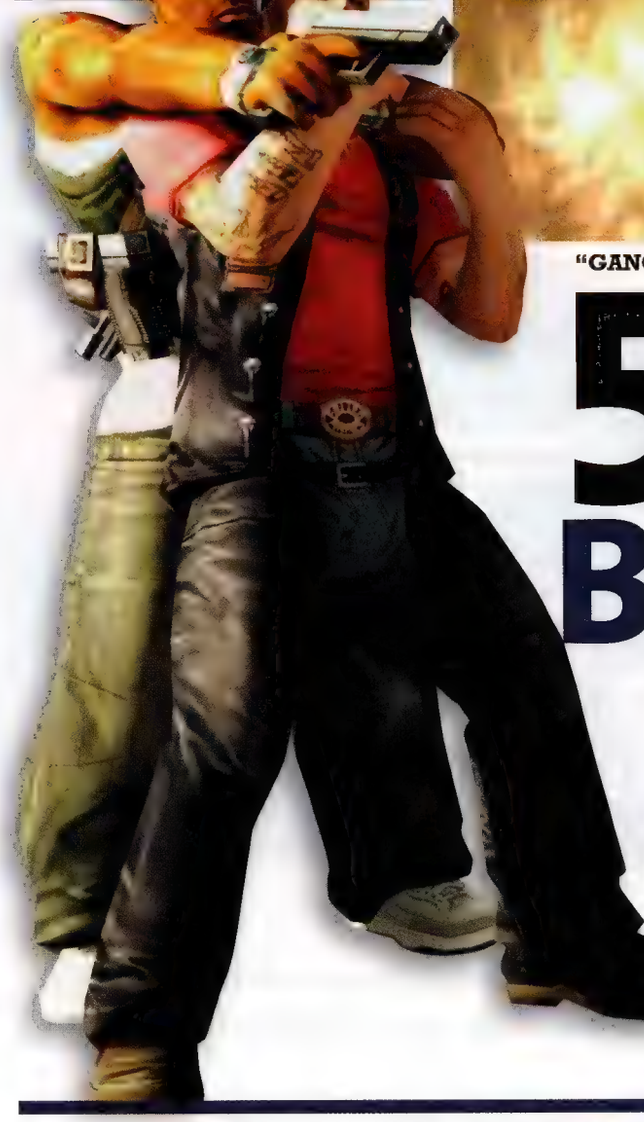
GAMEFAX
Action
License
Shit
Stupid

TRIVBURST
- About four CDs-worth of 50 Cent and G-Unit music.
- Dozens of videos to unlock by spendingn money 'earned' in-game.
- Scores of gruesome counter-kill moves.



WORKING AS A G-UNIT: Your gang just get in the way most of the time. Idiots.

The MON£¥ $HOT
The cut-scenes are fun, even if the plot is utter mince. 50 has all the acting prowess of a partucularly damp sponge, which is often hilarious.



"GANGSTA CRAP"

50 CENT BULLETPROOF

50 Cent says this game is a "learning tool". Well, it's certainly taught us never to go near it again.

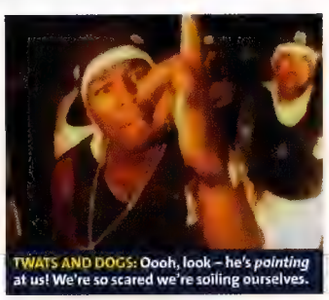
It would've been easy to disregard *Bulletproof* because it's another tired urban third-person shoot-'em-up. So we didn't. We sat down and tried to like it. But we couldn't, because, to be honest, it has almost no redeeming features – not only technically, but morally. We don't consider ourselves any kind of arbiter of decency but some of the stuff 50 gets up to is *unbelievable*. So now follows a review, not of cynicism, but of bitter disappointment. This could've been good.

We'd recount the plot, but it's so ludicrous that it really isn't worth it – all you need to know is that 50 is pissed off about something or other and wants revenge. Serving as both your hideout and the hub of the game, 'The Hood' is your source of weapons, contacts and mission objectives. Between levels you get to wander around two tiny streets (cordoned off by massively intrusive invisible walls) chatting to McVicar the corrupt cop (played by Eminem, who's actually the most entertaining character in the game), Griz (Dr Dre, your source of illegal firearms) and other 'colourful' street hoodlums, including a guy whose every word is a famous film quote. Brilliant. Anyway, this yields new missions, accessed by entering the subway.

And this is where things go utterly tits-up. The combat is dreadful. The much-mooted 'counter-kill' moves (short cut-scenes of increasingly-violent finishing moves) are accomplished by pressing ◎ at a certain point. There's no interaction (like *God Of War*'s thrilling Bemani button-bashing) and they're amazingly, pointlessly gory. One sees 50 plunge a knife into the top of a man's skull, then exclaim one of his tedious one-liners. "I even impress myself

MASS MEDIA

At any time during the game you can pull up 50's PDA and watch/listen to unlocked videos and music. One of our favourites is a low-budget piece of nonsense that features 50's crew tying up some poor soul who's wearing the wrong coloured top. They hover over him cocking their guns and yelling. Then they put him in the boot of their car and drive him to some waste ground before kicking him a bit. And all the while 50's smiling gormless mush looms in the foreground. Does 50 really think this is his life? It's a laughable sham – welcome to the dark days of hip-hop.

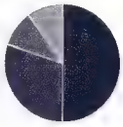


TWATS AND DOGS: Oooh, look – he's *painting* at us! We're so scared we're soiling ourselves.

CAR WARS: This is the flashy video for Candy Shop, the world's single most stupid song.

TOP 5 MUSICIANS IN GAMES

- Debbie Harry (*Vice City*)
- Michael Jackson (*Space Channel 5*)
- Aerosmith (*Revolution X*)
- Ice-T (*San Andreas*)
- David Bowie (*Omikron*)



GAMEPIE

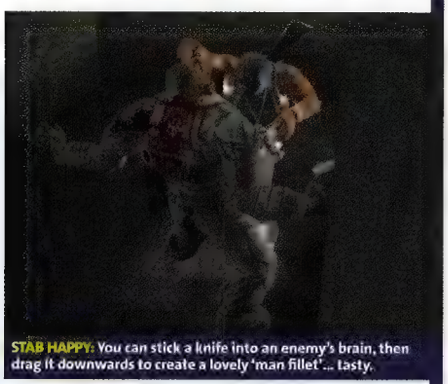
50% Murder
30% Stabbing
10% Guns
10% Drugs

ANSWER

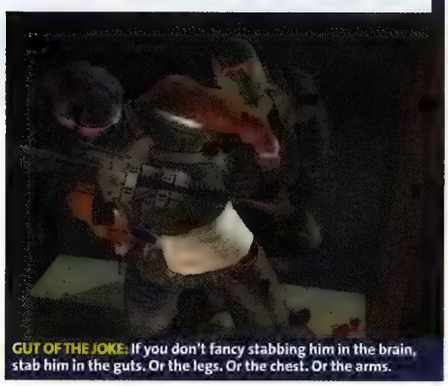
Yes. He features on Obie Trice's "Cheers", Snoop Dogg's "Rhythm 'n' Gangsta" and "Encore" by Eminem to name a few, credited as appearing as himself.

VIOLENCE, THY NAME IS 50 CENT

From the monstrous counter-kill moves to general combat, *50 Cent* is one of the most unbelievably violent games we've ever come across, which would explain the stupidly large 18 sticker on the front of the box. Not only that, but you rifle through the pockets of felled enemies and nick their jewels, wallets, credit cards and cash. You can then spend this in your hood and, er, buy *your own* songs from some bloke on the street. Fantastic...



STAB HAPPY: You can stick a knife into an enemy's brain, then drag it downwards to create a lovely 'man fillet'... tasty.



GUT OF THE JOKE: If you don't fancy stabbing him in the brain, stab him in the guts. Or the legs. Or the chest. Or the arms.

GUN IN THE SUN: 50 Cent, shooting a man to pieces then stealing money from his pockets. Such is his life.

sometimes!" boasts Fiddy. What? By stabbing a man in the brain? At least in *Manhunt* there was a reason for such madness – Cash was being forced into horrific acts and forced to make them as grisly as possible, or else he'd be killed. 50 just does it because he likes it. Absolutely gratuitous and included purely to earn that pleb-baiting 18 rating.

AIM AND SHAME

Normal combat is similarly stunted. Aiming is haphazard, there's no sense of impact and, extraordinarily, there's no lock-on whatsoever. Trying to target and take down an enemy accurately is a dreadful pain in the arse. There's the mildly entertaining ability to hover over a goon's head, wait for the target to shrink and then unleash an instant kill headshot (complete with *Max Payne*-style bullet-cam), but that's about as exciting as it gets. 50's posse, the G-Unit, help you in each mission, but thanks to some abysmal AI they get stuck behind doors, run directly into enemy fire or fail entirely to respond to your commands. Walk up to a locked door and press ⊗ to "call Banks", and he'll arse about for 10 minutes, get shot, get stuck behind a crate then come bumbling over. Absolutely infuriating, and one of a hundred similar glitches, bugs, faults and niggles.

The levels also seem to have been designed with irritation in mind – not only are they characterless cardboard cut-outs, they're also twisting, maze-like and irregular. We ran around a junkyard for literally 20 minutes trying to find the next part of the level. Not because we're rubbish, but because everything looks the same and there are scores of dead ends that crop up frustratingly regularly. They've even managed to make a gangsta's 'phat crib' look boring. And why are the doors all nine feet tall? 50 looks like a midget.

50 fans will love the fact that there's four CDs worth of music on here, not to mention dozens of videos, but that hardly excuses the fact that the game's a load of old arse. Entertaining cut-scenes aside, *Bulletproof* is a startlingly poor action game that appals and infuriates. Watch the vids, listen to the tracks, but don't play the game. **Andy Kelly**

■ **50 Cent *is out now.***

"WHY ARE THE DOORS ALL ABOUT NINE FEET TALL? 50 LOOKS LIKE A MIDGET"

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Instant headshots are quite cool. – Fractured, awkward and no bloody lock-on!	+ Some good character design here and there. – Grey, flat, bland and lifeless.	+ If you like 50, all his tunes are in here. – Some really, really annoying 'beats'.

LIFESPAN

If you're after every song and video, you can replay levels to accumulate cash. Otherwise, it's your standard 11 hour run-through.

MINUTES ... YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
THE NINJABREAD MAN

IT'S WORSE THAN...
MATRIX: PATH OF NEO

50 himself reckoned this would "change the world of videogames" – well, in that *Bulletproof* sets a new benchmark low for a 'cash-in', he's right.

48

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Cranky Pants
Publisher: THQ
Players: 1
Memory Save: 132kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer
"Did you know that Bruce Campbell's autobiography is called 'If Chins Could Kill: Confessions of a B-Movie Actor'?".

GAMEPIE
66% Shooting and slashing
14% Puzzle solving
13% Midget kicking
07% Enjoying the cut-scenes.

GAMEFAX
Horror
Film License
Hard
Shit

TRIVBURST
- Bruce Campbell provided creative direction on the project
- 20 unlockable items in the game, including clips about the making of it.
- Eight hours of play time

The MON£¥ $HOT
If you get really angry (and you will) you can switch to Evil Ash, who goes all flashy and is able to kill Deadites just that little bit quicker.

"THE REGENERATION GAME"

EVIL DEAD REGENERATION

Ever wondered why the Evil Dead are rising? Well, otherwise they'd just be spinning in their grave...

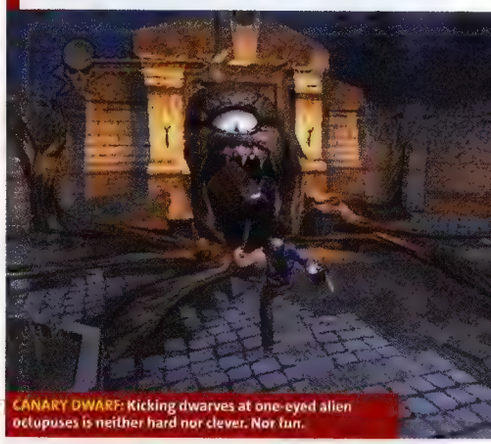
It's been 24 years since the original Evil Dead film came out, and over 12 since the last, so it's a testament to the dumb brilliance of Sam Raimi's take on the zombie film that there's still demand. But previous *Evil Dead* efforts have ranged from 'disappointing' to 'crushingly disappointing'. And this one's no different.

Yet *Evil Dead* has the potential for gaming greatness. It has elements that should equate to gold – dark humour, a violent disrespect for zombies and a compelling lead character. Ash is a gaming gimme – a character whose look, wisecracks and attitude are just crying out for a good adventure to be built around them. He's got a chainsaw for an arm for Christ's sake; surely something more can be done than *Evil Dead: Regeneration* – a hack and slash action game that's triumphant in its tedium.

As expected, Ash is charged with the task of killing load of deadites – a type of flailing zombie. Now, he can do this by shooting them with a shotgun, slashing them with the chainsaw or a combination of both. Once you've locked onto to a deadite, it just becomes a case of button bashing and, for all the bloody animation, the result is just a remedial *Devil May Cry*.

WALKING SMALL

Here's where Sam comes into play – Ash can kick him! By pressing up on the D-pad, Ash can dropkick Sam onto to a deadite's head so he can tear off their skull or temporarily distract them. It's supposed to add an element of strategy to the action, but even booting Sam in the head repeatedly, as he's the source of much of the anguish you get from the game, can't alleviate any of the misery you'll get from playing *Regeneration*. There are also times you can possess Sam's body, but who on Earth buys an *Evil Dead* game simply to play as an undead short arse? No-one, that's who.



CANARY DWARF: Kicking dwarves at one-eyed alien octupuses is neither hard nor clever. Nor fun.

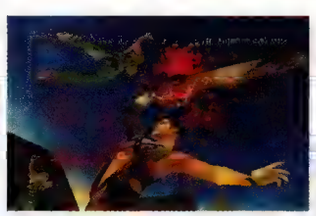
SNOWBAWL

The worst thing is that it's been made too hard, as awkwardly placed save points force you to repeat boring bits. And death is around most corners, as the snowballs some deadites throw are more damaging than you think. We don't mind getting our head ripped off by a monster – but death by snowball isn't an ending for any hero. It must have dawned on the developers what a tepid game it is as they dropped Sam in there – a deadite midget with a good soul – to play the 'funny sidekick' role.

But Sam is as funny as Jim Davidson. He's a Binks, a Scrappy Doo – contrived and a distraction. Ash can kick him, but when a game relies on kicking midgets to entertain, you're in trouble.

Regeneration is better than the truly criminal *Hail to the King*, but it's a sorry day when any game makes the last *Evil Dead* game – *Fistful Of Boomstick* – look cultivated. **Dave Harrison**

■ Evil Dead *is out now.*



PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ It's great to see Ash in full flow. – Dumb objectives really scupper the game.	+ Ash looks great and moves well. – The levels are dull and unimaginative.	+ Some of the wisecracks are actually funny. – Unfortunately, they're repeated too often.

LIFESPAN
It's not a huge game, and taking into account there's very little replay value, this won't see you through the long winter months

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
HAIL TO THE KING

IT'S WORSE THAN...
FISTFUL OF BOOMSTICK

A game that strangely tries to tread the line between being numbingly dull and horrifically annoying, but regularly topples into being both.

47

INFOSTRIP

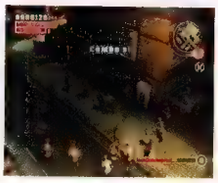
DETAILS
Developer: Hothouse
Publisher: Konami
Players: 1
Memory Save: 325KB KB
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: Yes
Surround Sound: Yes

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer
"D12 member Proof once won a freestyling competition run by renowned hip-hop mag The Source in 1998."

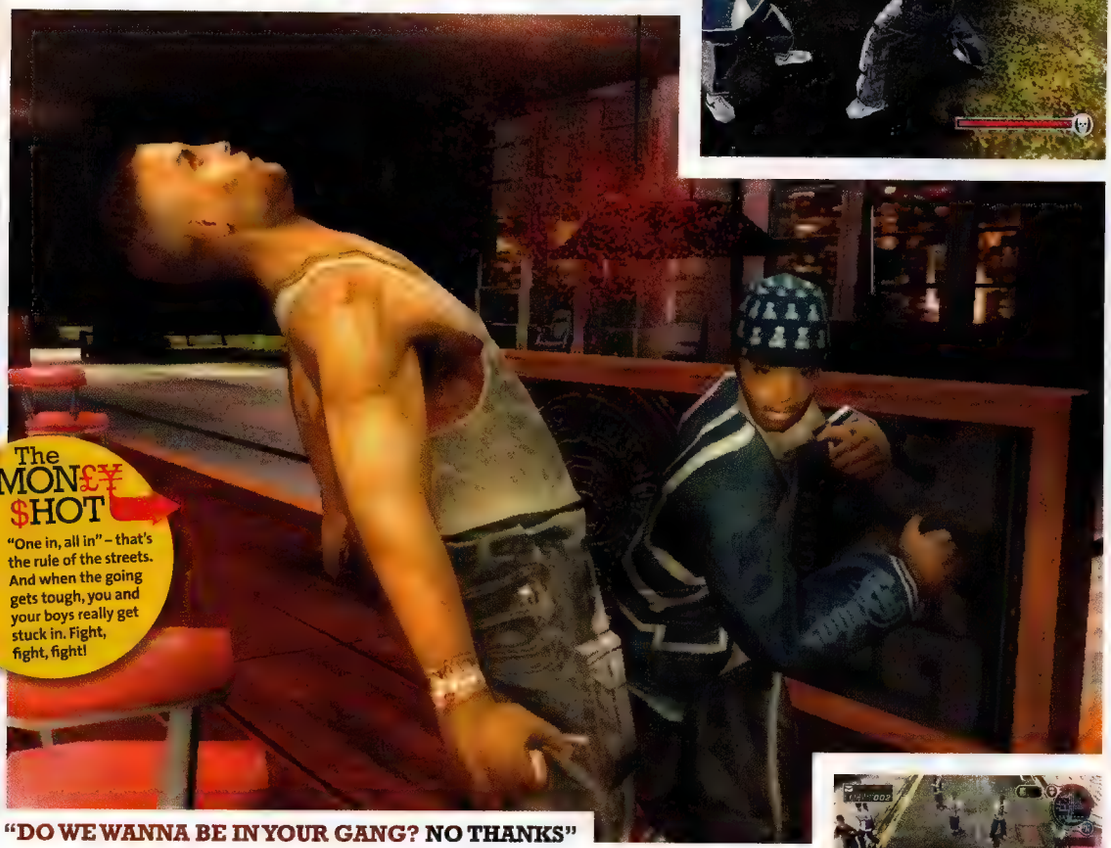
GAMEPIE
25% Beating up rival gangs...
25% ...over...
25% ...and over...
25% ...again.

GAMEFAX
GTA Copy
Action
Violent
Shit

TRIVBURST
- Work your way up from hood-rat to gang leader in the story mode.
- Get involved in fighting tournaments.
- Voice talent by Eminem's band, D12...



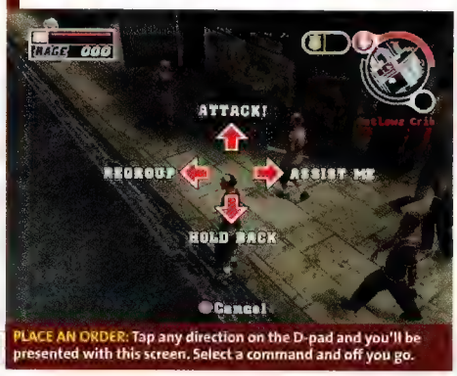
BOYS IN THEIR HOODS: Each group you see wandering the streets will be dressed in their specific gang colours.



The MON£Y $HOT
"One in, all in" – that's the rule of the streets. And when the going gets tough, you and your boys really get stuck in. Fight, fight, fight!

CONTROL THE STREETS

With a doffed cap to the *Conflict* games (and just about every other army outing) *Crime Life* lets you order your homies around. Hitting the D-pad in a specific direction will instruct your clan to regroup, assist, hold back or attack... in theory. In reality, there's no difference between 'attack' and 'hold back'. As soon as your mob of hoodlums see a rival gang, they set upon them like pack of blinged-up wolves. And no amount of barked commands will quell their bloodlust. They eventually stop, though – once the streets are strewn with battered corpses. Thanks.



PLACE AN ORDER: Tap any direction on the D-pad and you'll be presented with this screen. Select a command and off you go.

"DO WE WANNA BE IN YOUR GANG? NO THANKS"

CRIME LIFE: GANG WARS

This wants to be *GTA* so badly it hurts – almost as much as it does to play this awful game.

How many middle-class businessmen does it take to make an 'urban' crime game? Why do we ask? Well if there was ever a prime example of a game designed by people with *no idea* about their subject matter, then it's *Crime Life*. A game that rips off countless ideas (like *Def Jam*'s pit-fighting tournaments, the *Conflict* series' team commands and just about everything from *GTA*) then churns them out in one dismal 'ghetto' disaster that borders on farce.

Crime Life casts you as young thug Tre, and his battle to climb the Gangster ladder (it's like a normal ladder, but diamond-studded with bikini-clad women jiggling on every rung). According to the press release, the game "promotes a strong sense of morality". Sure it does. While we were stabbing a rival gang member in the eyes, we were in anguish about whether we were morally justified in these acts of hideous violence. Or not. Morality must've been sleeping while this was happening. Or maybe it's permanently comatose because this game's all about stealing, beating and trashing everything in sight. Oh, sorry, it *does* tell you not to kill the jewellers as you're robbing them. Just a few slaps about the head with an iron bar will do. Moral salvation! Don't bar those pearly gates just yet, eh?

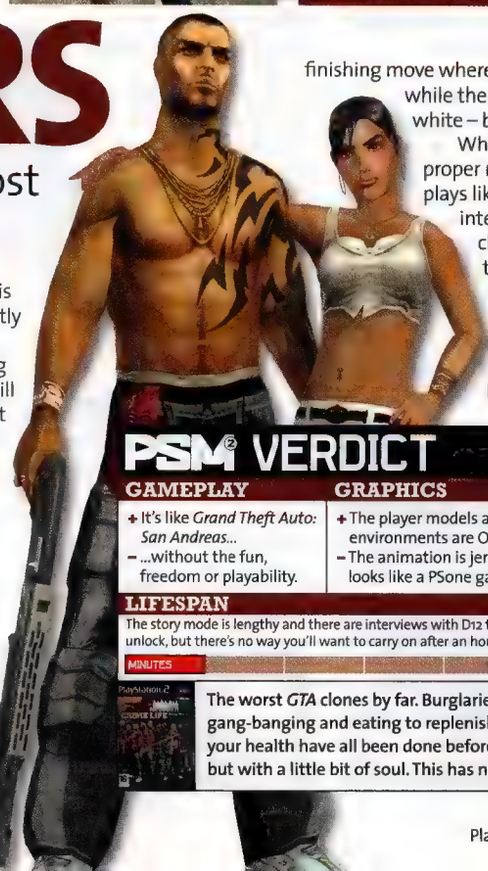
GANG BORES

Crime Life is embarrassingly bad, to say the least. You run from one area to another, beating up groups of thugs with 'imaginative' names like Justiss and Mechanix. Slap them about a bit, and then you're instructed (via text message, natch) to get yourself off to the likes of 'Blingsley Hills' to rob a restaurant. Sigh. There is one redeeming feature to this dross – the finishing move where you snap a bloke's neck while the screen flashes black and white – but even that gets repetitive.

While *San Andreas* offers a proper mission structure *Crime Life* plays like a jerky, lightweight interpretation of Rockstar's classic. Whoever dreamed up this soulless, cliché-heavy adventure obviously hasn't seen any 'streets' outside of downtown Norwich. Word.

Nathan Irvine

■ *Crime Life is in stores now.*



PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ It's like *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*... – ...without the fun, freedom or playability.	+ The player models and environments are OK. – The animation is jerky. It looks like a PSone game.	+ All the hip-hop stylings that you'd expect. – But the voice acting and soundtrack are poor.

LIFESPAN
The story mode is lengthy and there are interviews with D12 to unlock, but there's no way you'll want to carry on after an hour.
MINUTES

IT'S BETTER THAN...
MIAMI VICE

IT'S WORSE THAN...
GTA SAN ANDREAS

The worst *GTA* clones by far. Burglaries, gang-banging and eating to replenish your health have all been done before – but with a little bit of soul. This has none.

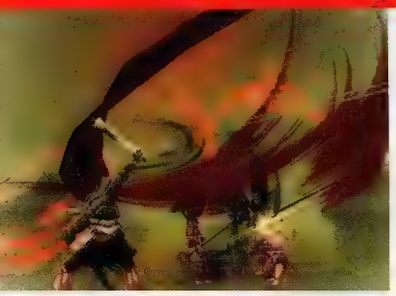
30

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Capcom
Publisher: Capcom
Players: 1
Memory Save: 192 KB
Widescreen: No
50/60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

GAMEFAX
Action
Violent
Tap Curio

TRIVBURST
- Six characters and a fortress to destroy
- Eight combos per character
- Vehicles and bosses



The MON£¥ $HOT

When the screen is full of characters it's quite impressive, although there's a lot of fogging, naturally. It's not stunning, but often looks slick.

INCREASE THE PEACE

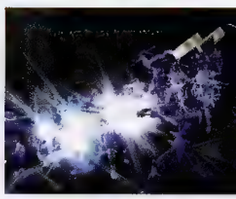
As is tradition, you're able to upgrade your characters after battles. This happens through a fairly run-of-the-mill points system and, well, it's satisfactory. We do like the ability to equip items found on the battlefield and in the 'pockets' of felled enemies, though. For instance, pull on a pair of magic shoes and your stats are increased – speed, strength and so on. You can harvest new weapons too, so by the end of each character's story mode you'll be an unstoppable powerhouse. So far, so average, but it'll appeal to RPG heads.

WEAPON OF CHOICE: Like *Dynasty Warriors*, there's a good mix of 'heavy' characters and nimbler, quicker ones.

"IF YOU LIKE DYNASTY WARRIORS... PLAY THAT INSTEAD"

DEVIL KINGS

It's *Dynasty Warriors*, only a bit different. And to be honest, when we say 'a bit', we're doing it a favour...



D*evil Kings* started life as Sengoku Basara, a *Dynasty Warriors*-style fighting game that, as these games often do, sold like mental in Japan. For its Western incarnation, however, Capcom have added reams of new content, tweaked various gameplay elements and basically made it loads better. But is it anything more than a *Dynasty Warriors* rip-off?

Well, it doesn't get bogged down in historical accuracy – it follows a skewed timeline that mixes the armour and weapons of feudal-era Japan with guns, machinery and, er, lasers. The environments are also more interesting, with varying terrain, more buildings and an eye-pleasing colour palette that extends further than 'grey'.

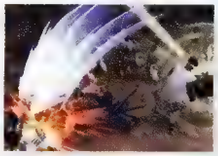
But otherwise, it's pretty much identical. You fight your way through an ever-changing battlefield, defeating generals and commanders to raise your troops' morale and take control of the level. Among the hordes of identical soldiers there's the odd special character that serves as a sort of boss. These are the characters you can play as in story mode and include a foxy ninja lady, a girl with a pair of blade-tipped yo-yos and the titular king of all devils, the Devil King. There are six default characters, with a further six to unlock, not to mention eight combos for each.

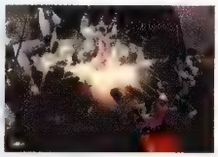
COMBAT DEVOLVED

Good variation, then, but that only stretches as far as the characters. The combat suffers in the same way as *Dynasty Warriors* in that it's *incredibly* tedious. You're literally alternating between ⊡ and Ⓐ for 40 minutes, and while it's entertaining to watch your character flit and spin between enemies, ripping them to shreds, you aren't *really* doing anything. It's terribly unsatisfying – you'd think they would've taken the chance to improve upon the Koei stable of games, but it's more of a 'companion' to the likes of *Samurai Warriors*.

The Japanese love this kind of thing, though, which would explain why it went straight to the top of the charts over there. Us on the other hand... well, we just can't get past the fact that it's so shamelessly similar to *Dynasty Warriors*. We've had our fill of large-scale historical war games and it's high time they ditched the formula and concentrated on something newer and more progressive. A decent attempt, but – and it hurts to say it – not *really* worth playing. **Andy Kelly**

Devil Kings *is out now.*





PSM² VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Smooth, fluid combat... – ...that requires almost no input whatsoever. Disappointing.	+ Character design by the *Devil May Cry* guy. – Really, really jaggy. Far from perfect.	+ Voice acting that's so bad, it's good. – Repeating voice samples get on the nerves.

LIFESPAN

Story mode isn't *that* long, but some battles can drag on for up to an hour. Stick at it and you'll be at it for a while.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
BUJINGAI

IT'S WORSE THAN...
SAMURAI WARRIORS

Better than *Dynasty Warriors* in many ways, but not fresh, entertaining or interesting enough to steal its crown. Only for *Dynasty* nutjobs.

64

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INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Heavy Iron Studios
Publisher: THQ
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 72KB
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer
"In the Indian version of The Incredibles, Mr Incredible and his son Dash are voiced by real-life father and son, Shahrukh and Aryan Khan."

GAMEPIE
25% Smashing robots.
25% Smashing robots.
25% Smashing robots.
25% Smashing more robots.

GAMEFAX
Action
Superhero
Film license
On-Rails

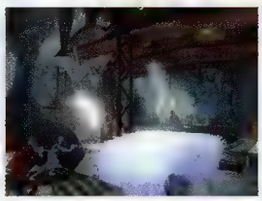
TRIVBURST
- Play as Mr Incredible and Frozone.
- Co-op play allows you to drop in and out of games on-the-fly.
- Unlock concept art.

The MON£Y $HOT
Mr Incredible might have strength, but Frozone is the one with the style. Check out the way he carves up the air on his special ice-board.

FREEZE A CROWD

Switching between Mr Incredible and Frozone enables you to harness their specific skills, while also combining their traits to make light work of enemies. Whereas Mr Incredible can lift up huge platforms and smash giant objects, Frozone can glide across big gaps with his Silver Surfer-style board. The ice-man can also freeze bigger robots so that Mr Incredible can smash them while they're prone. Not only that, Frozone can also create ice bridges for the pair to cross pits of certain death. Their differing styles keep things fresh but we'd have much preferred to have had the entire Incredible brood here.

"NO, I SAID 'ICE' ASS, HONEST!" Press ↑ on the D-pad to switch between the heroes. You can't switch in Co-op mode, mind.



"UNDERMINING THE INCREDIBLES' GOOD NAME

THE INCREDIBLES: RISE OF THE UNDERMINER

Guess what? You only get to play as *one* member of the Incredible family. Where's the fun in that, eh?

We're not quite sure why this game exists – after all, it's not like there's a sequel to the original Incredibles film. Nor are we sure why it's called *The Incredibles* (plural). You only get to play as Mr Incredible and the ice-man Frozone. No, it's all about lining THQ's cavernous pockets with filthy cash. And why not? Christmas is just around the corner and it's the perfect stocking filler for little Jonny. But he's not going to enjoy *Rise Of The Underminer* unless he's got someone else to play with. Let us explain.

RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINES: While the robots are frozen, Mr Incredible can pummel them into scrap metal.

Rise Of The Underminer couldn't be simpler. You fight your way through swarms of unimaginatively designed robots (think bargain bin at Toys 'R Us) while pulling levers, smashing large computers and not much else. All in all, it's largely mundane. But when you get another person involved things improve. Erm... slightly.

TEAM FOR TWO

You see, there's a great sense of teamwork in *Rise Of The Underminer* so long as you've got a chum. For example, as one of you uses Frozone to frost-blast enemy rockets, the other can use Mr Incredible to lob the iced-up missiles back where they came from – knocking the assailing bot on its arse. Nice. Now this works well in co-op mode, but if you're flying solo it's a little tricky to switch characters on the fly (↑ on the D-pad) and still maintain your cool. This is mainly because the AI is as useful as a chocolate fireman. Surprisingly, *Rise Of The Underminer* features a command mode like in *Freedom Fighters*. So you can theoretically tell your chum to be more aggressive (←) or to guard (↓) but you'd have to be eagle-eyed to notice any difference. They'll just fly around unawares, thus quashing any illusion of teamwork with the AI.

Underminer's almost comically repetitive. You bash up robots until you get to a broken bridge/floating platform/lift and then repeat to fade. There are some puzzle elements to splice up the robot abuse (like the one where you have to save an automaton by solving tasks on the level above it) but this shameless cash-cow is mind-numbingly tedious. The story won't grasp and the action won't entertain you for long. Plus, the only glimpse of the rest of the rest of the family is in the first and last cut-scenes. Hopefully, if there is a sequel to the film to be made, it'll be far more incredible than this. **Nathan Irvine**

■ Rise Of The Underminer *is out now.*

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY
+ Like punching robots, eh? You'll love this then.
– There's not much else apart from the above.

GRAPHICS
+ Bold and colourful characters.
– The environments are somewhat uninspiring.

SOUND
+ Nice dramatic music throughout.
– Lame voice-acting becomes repetitive.

LIFESPAN
With approximately six hours of gameplay, it's not exactly the longest game in the world. There's artwork to find, but... nah.
MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
CATWOMAN

IT'S WORSE THAN...
THE INCREDIBLES

Rise Of The Underwhelming would've been more fitting. The action is as dull as you like and, basically, there's not that much to get excited about. Average.

50

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Shaba Games
Publisher: Activision
Players: 1-4
Memory Save: 63 KB
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

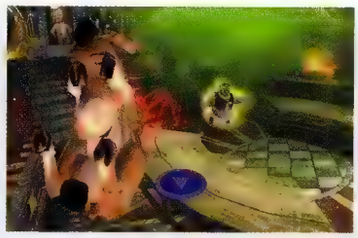
PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"In Yiddish, Shrek means 'monster'. And he actually is a monster and everything. Handy, that."

GAMEPIE
23% Hitting people with hams.
29% Laughing at the Gingerbread Man.
32% Mashing the Quick Attack button.
16% Laughing at Pinocchio.

GAMEFAX
Beat-'em-up
For Kids
Multi-tap
Easy

TRIVBURST
- 45 levels in the Mega Challenge.
- Scrap as 20 different characters.
- 16 levels to choose from.
- Desperately short Story Mode. Shame.

FIGHT LIKE A PUSSY: Puss has one of the more bizarre special moves which involves a floating vision of his head.



PSM2 BRONZE AWARD

The MON£¥ $HOT
It's a good multi-player game, especially when three players just decide to pick on one person and beat the crap out of them. Hee hee.

THE GINGER WARRIOR

One the most important characters in the Story Mode is the Gingerbread Man, as the plot hangs together around his thirst for justice and strong moral fibre. The way he continually stands up for ogres, some pussy with a sword and foes that could literally eat him is amazing, and is a lesson for anyone who needs the courage to overcome something in their life. Also it's dead funny when pretends to be a gangsta rapper and beats up a bearded man in hat called G-Nome. The characterisation in *Super Slam* is terrific, all told.

SWEET HUSTLER: Check out the blue icing velour suit and headband. Obviously Gingy fought velour and velour won.

"WHO YOU CALLING A FAIRYTALE?"

SHREK SUPER SLAM

Any beat-em-up with the Gingerbread Man in a velour tracksuit is alright by us.

In a time when bullying is said to be at crisis levels in UK schools, where people are mercilessly abused just for being a bit different – it's refreshing to see that videogames are producing role models that kids can aspire to. Like Pinocchio for instance: a poor puppet with sinus problems, who just wants to be a real boy, but is constantly getting jip from a Black Knight. Until one day, when he has enough and anger surges through his timber frame – and he beats the Dark Knight senseless with a large ham! Now that's how you deal with a bully.

Now, life lessons apart, what you get with *Super Slam* is a beat-'em-up using the template defined by *Power Stone* all those years back, but with 20 characters from the Shrek films. Sounds like a lazy, licensed rip off, but it's actually very playable and very, very funny.

Rather than being a classic beat-'em-up, *Super Slam* allows the characters to bounce around the arena, picking up weapons, power-ups or just pieces of the scenery to chuck at each other. If that doesn't work they can just pile in and slug it out toe-to-toe. It's not a particularly complicated set-up but it's very tightly put together so all the moves are responsive and it's never frustrating to play. After that it's all about the Shrek magic.

NO PLACE LIKE GNOME

The Shrek universe is full of really daft characters that never fail to entertain – the Gingerbread Man, Pinnocchio, the Gnomes – and just watching beat them crap out of each other is very amusing, mainly as they all seem to take it so seriously. Also the special moves are superb, from Puss's eerie hypnotic giant cat face to Shrek's apocalyptic fart.

Unfortunately the Story Mode, with its great cut-scenes, is ridiculously short, but there's a 45 level Mega Challenge mode that's strangely inventive. For instance, in one level you're asked to keep a big Pinnocchio head away from the wooden boy for 25 seconds. Weird.

While each *Tekken* and *Virtua Fighter* become less memorable, it's the licensed beat-'em-ups that seemed to be more exciting – such as this and *Dragon Ball Z*. Now we're not suggesting that *Shrek* is more sophisticated game, but perhaps taking a bit more time on creating characters you care about might pay dividends. Well, games developers better wise up or they'll be a getting a candy cane right where it hurts. **Dave Harrison**

■ Shrek Super Slam *is out now.*

RANT AND SHREK: Each character has their own unique moves, but the actual buttons presses are all the same.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ More challenging than you might think. – Descends into button bushing sometimes.	+ Kept simple and suitably cartoony. – Players can get lost in the detail occasionally.	+ The Shrek/Donkey impressions are ace. – Some of the songs start to grate after a bit.

LIFESPAN
Single players probably won't perservere with this for too long, but if you've enough mates, you'll be at it for ages. The game, that is.
MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
MARVEL NEMESIS

IT'S WORSE THAN...
SOUL CALIBUR III

Probably designed to keep nine-year-olds happy but will also tease a few smiles out of jaded older folk as well. Very playable and definitely worth a look.

70

INFOSTRIP

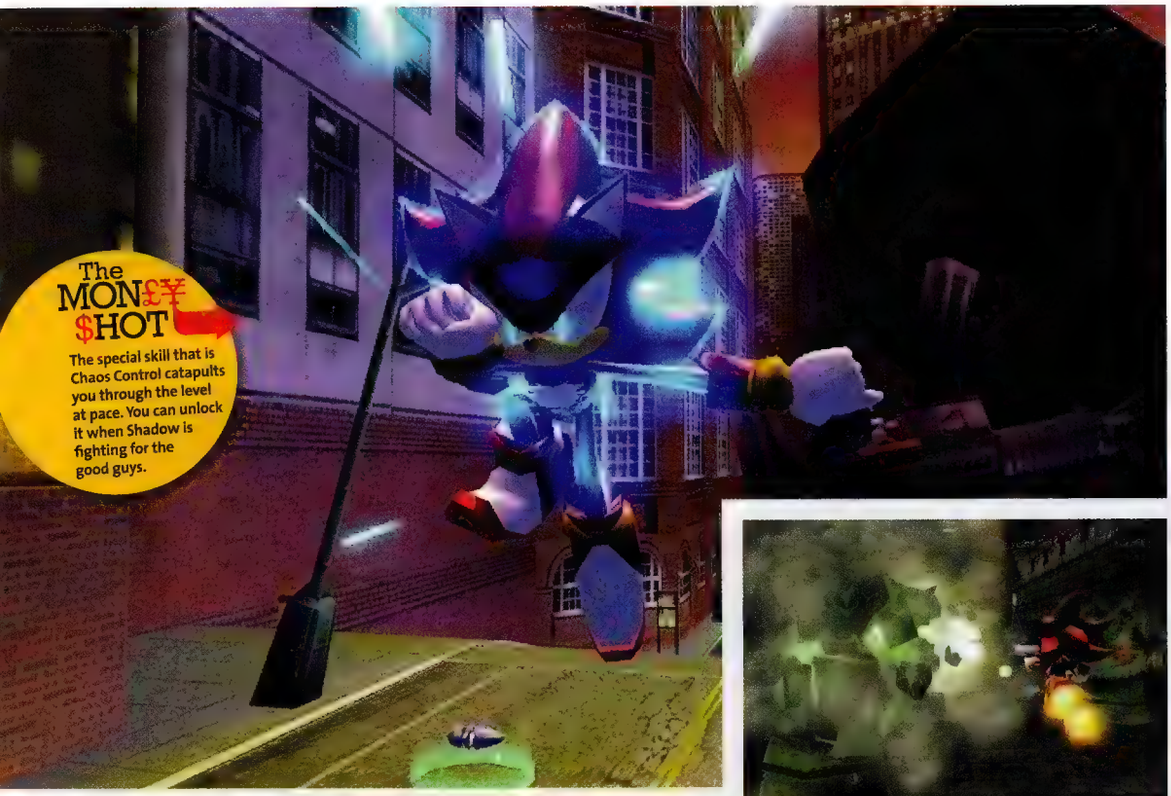
DETAILS
Developer: Sega
Publisher: Sega
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 154 KB
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: Yes
Surround Sound: Yes

QUESTION...
How many spines do Hedgehogs have?

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"Female hedgehogs are able to lay their spines flat so that male hedgehogs can... well... give them a big hug. Yes."

GAMEFAX
Platformer
Gangsta
On Rails
Sequel

TRIVBURST
- Wide collection of weaponry including bazookas and swords.
- Lots of vehicles, from hang-gliders to motorcycles.
- Multiple ending according to how you play the game.



The MON£Y $HOT
The special skill that is Chaos Control catapults you through the level at pace. You can unlock it when Shadow is fighting for the good guys.

HEDGEHOGGING YOUR BETS

You can choose to align yourself with the good guys or the bad, though you can change your mind at any point during a level. You'll be accompanied by one character throughout each stage from whichever side you choose. Almost every Sonic side-character makes an appearance at some point, including the blue spiked wonder himself and, unfortunately, Tails.

CHOCOLATE STARFISH: This is über bad guy Black Doom's third eye, which follows Shadow around on dark missions.

"ME AND MY SHADOW. AND A ROCKET LAUNCHER"

SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG

He's a gun-totin', motorcycle-ridin', gangsta-trippin'... hedgehog. Oh, dear.

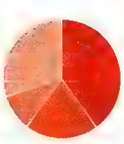
A bunch of Sega execs sit around a conference room table staring at a picture of a button-nosed blue hedgehog, a monarch of the gaming world now fallen from grace. "Wait, I've got it..." one says. "No... never mind." Another starts to raise a hand but then lowers it again. They collectively sigh and go back to staring at the picture. It hits lunchtime and executive tummies start to rumble. "Oh, bugger it," says head honcho exec, "Let's just give him a side character with some guns and a motorbike. We'll stick in some thrash metal and call it 'Urban'. Easy." Of course this is only how PSM2 imagines the decision to give the *Sonic* brand a bold new direction, but we'll bet you seven Chaos Emeralds that we're not far off the truth.

The premise here is that Shadow, Sonic's most enigmatic buddy, has lost his memory. He's caught in a war between the Black aliens, the GUN army and Dr Eggman. He must recover the Chaos Emeralds, side with one of the three factions and occasionally switch allegiance to find out who he his, and what happened to a girl named Maria, who is the one person he can remember. You can choose to fight on the side of good or evil, affecting which levels you open up, how you proceed and what sort of ending you get.

The introduction of weapons coupled with the variety of vehicles available in the game – including alien ships, motorbikes and

TOP FIVE SHADOW GAMES

- *Shadow Of The Colossus* 91%
- *Shadow of Rome* 85%
- *Shadow Hearts: Covenant* 84%
- *Shadow of Memories* 80%
- *Shadow Man: 2econd Coming* 68%



GAMEPIE

40% Running.
20% Poppin' caps in asses.
10% Choosing between good and evil.
30% Rolling your eyes.

ANSWER

They have an averave of 500 spines on their backs. Pointy!

SAME AS IT EVER WAS: When you're not popping caps in cops' asses, the game plays pretty much like your classic *Sonic*.

BOO-YA! OR JUST BOO?

Shadow's weapons range from a sign posts and tree branches to alien laser swords and rocket launchers. Unfortunately they're unwieldy, the aiming is very fiddly and the fast-paced action is constantly interrupted as you get into fire fights. This hog might be packin' heat but it's not big or clever. Sorry to go on, but *Sonic*'s about sprinting at stupid speeds and collecting rings. It's not about, well, *this*. Never do this again, Sega.

ROCKET HOG: Rocket launchers should definitely do more than just graze your enemies a little bit.

SIGN OF THE TIMES: Yes, the hilarious irony of using a speed limit sign as a weapon in Sonic game. Zzzzz.

MARIA, FULL OF GRACE: this girl is all that Shadow can remember of his past. Can he find her again?

INTO THE BLUE: The bright blue sky levels of old are few and far between this time round

hang-gliders – might lead you to believe that *Shadow* won't play like a *Sonic* game – but you'd be wrong. In fact, it's very much your typical *Sonic* gameplay, but with a whole bunch of new stuff stacked on top. At first we quite liked this idea, but the reality is that stopping the action to pull out a rocket launcher and then struggling with the dodgy aiming isn't much fun. Equally the vehicles, with few exceptions, feel awkward and cumbersome.

Ultimately the new additions to the game don't blend in with the speed of classic *Sonic* action and feel very much like an afterthought.

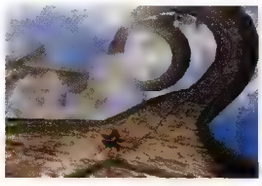
CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

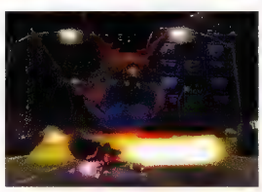
The other major addition to the game is that complex branching storyline. The choice of who you join forces with and the ability to switch sides as you go along is engaging and draws you into the plot. Up at the top of the screen you'll see two bars. Shoot at the alien invaders and follow the mission of one of the various hero characters and the blue bar fills up. If you follow holographic alien bad guy Black Doom and shoot at the police defending the planet, the red bar will fill instead. Then, once they're full, these bars give you access to a super skill. You can unlock either Chaos Control if you follow the path of good, enabling you to zoom through the level at insane speed, or if you choose to go the dark side, you get Chaos Blast, causing massive destruction all over the shop. At the end of each level, depending which mission you set out to achieve, you'll access one of several possible next stages. In fact, there are more than 50 missions but you can't access them all in one playthrough. – it certainly adds a bit of depth.

But nothing can even vaguely justify the urban, darker tone of the game. There's *no need* for the guns and motorcycles and the rock music and gangsta posturing are just teeth-grindingly, excruciating. *Sonic* games are about a cute little hedgehog racing through colourful levels with blue skies. They're *not* about shooting police in the face with a sub-machine gun in dark alleyways. This isn't *50 Cent*. It's the *laziest* way to update a game. There are, in life, very few things that wouldn't be more fun with a rocket launcher to hand, but *Shadow* isn't one of them. Yes, it *does* offer a lot to keep you interested, but it's difficult to overlook the insultingly blatant and ham-fisted attempt to pimp our hedgehog. **Kirsten Kearney**

■ Shadow The Hedgehog *is out now*

"SONIC'S JUST NOT ABOUT SHOOTING COPS. IT'S THE LAZIEST WAY TO UPDATE IT"





PSM VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Great branching complex storyline. – Weapons and vehicles handle poorly.	+ Cut-scenes look great. Very effective. – Dismally dark urban settings. Rubbish.	+ Quality voice acting adds to the experience. – Annoying generic rock soundtrack.

LIFESPAN

There's a lot to it – it'll take a few playthroughs to see it all. Whether you've the patience to do so is another matter.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
SONIC HEROES

IT'S WORSE THAN...
RATCHET & CLANK 3

A few interesting level options don't make up for throwing in a totally unnecessary armoury of weapons and vehicles. Say no to gangsta hedgehogs!

60

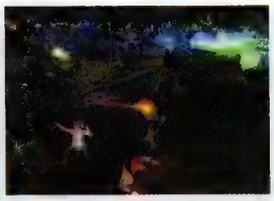
DETAILS
Developer: EA
Publisher: EA
Players: 1-3
Memory Save: 165kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer
"Harry's eyes are green in the novels, but Daniel Radcliffe – who plays him in the films – has blue eyes. Call the continuity police."

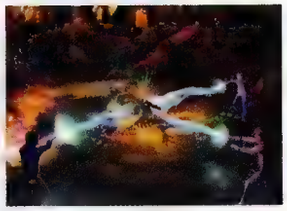
GAMEPIE
40% "God, I'm bored."
40% "*Really* bored."
20% "I seriously think I'd have more thrills watching Where The Heart Is."

GAMEFAX
Action
For Kids
Film license
Sequel

TRIVBURST
- The fourth Harry Potter game on PS2.
- And the most boring.
- Takes in the key scenes from the new movie.
- Three-player co-op mode.

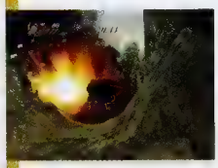


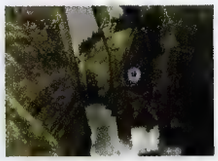
The MON£¥ $HOT
You'll be using this water spell a lot, to put out flames and subdue fiery monsters. In fact, you'll use it so much it becomes a bit dull. Never mind, eh?



CHASING THE DRAGON

Well, it's more the dragon chasing you, technically... Anyway, as if to really ram home just how boring most of *Goblet Of Fire* is, you get a *fantastically exciting* chase scene, with a broomstick-riding Harry being pursued through the skies by a whopping great dragon. It *belts* along, as Harry dodges blasts of flame, ducks through tunnels, whips over the sea and through speed-boost rings (as if your face wasn't already melting at the velocity). Although the camera shifts you into position to dodge obstacles, it's still brilliant fun. And then you're faced with the rest of the game, which now feels even more crushingly tedious than ever. Thanks a lot, EA.





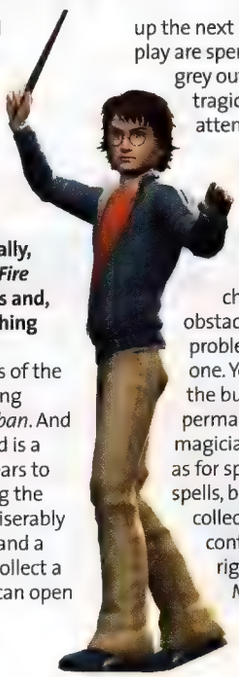
"CAN'T WAIT TO SEE HOW **BARRY HATTER** TURNS OUT"

HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE

Harry Potter, eh? He has all sorts of adventures in his new film. Should make for a thrilling game, yes? Oh.

EA have clearly noticed that the new Potter film and book see the boy wizard grow up a bit. He's a bit older and, insofar as a fictional magical public schoolboy wizard can be, a little more 'streetwise'. Now, as has been oft-discussed, EA love things that are 'mature' and 'street'. So naturally, they've proceeded to make *Goblet Of Fire* much darker than previous PS2 Potters and, in doing so, have... turned the whole thing into a deeply depressing trudge. Sigh.

So out go the colourful landscapes of the previous games. Out go the entertaining EyeToy minigames of *Prisoner Of Azkaban*. And out goes the fun. What you get instead is a camera so far above the action it appears to be on the moon, a *sewer level* (reducing the world's most popular boy wizard to miserably shuffling through people's effluence) and a mission structure that demands you collect a certain amount of shields before you can open up the next stage, meaning that your first hours of play are spent clambering around the wearisomely grey outside walls of Hogwarts or the tragically tedious forest level desperately attempting to find more.



MAGIC CIRCLE

To make matters worse, the strategy-lite elements of last year's game have also fallen by the wayside. Previously, you could swap between characters mid-level, so approach obstacles with the most suitable wiz for the problem, be it Harry, Hermione or the ginger one. You could also assign spells to each of the buttons. But no more. Now, you're permanently stuck with whichever junior magician you pick at the start of the level, and as for spell choice – forget it. There are loads of spells, but (bar the attack spell on ⊗ and the collect items spell on △) they're completely context-sensitive – the game will pick the right one for you in the right situation.

Mostly, all you have to do is wander up to an obstacle – a locked gate, a fire, whatever – and press □. Voila – problem overcome.

Oh, dear. This isn't very positive, is it? But *Goblet Of Fire* isn't much fun, and is, in truth, a step backwards from a series that'd been progressing slowly. Technically, it's fine, but the combat (running around and hammering ⊗ generally suffices) and the puzzles (usually involving shifting blocks from A to B) are as dull as you like. It's just boring and, with *this* license, there's no excuse for that. Could do better. **David Cook.**

■ Goblet Of Fire *is out now.*

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Great dragon chase sequence. – The rest is largely a turgid drudge.	+ Well, it looks sharp. Good character models. – Grey and gloomy. Welcome to Dullsville.	+ Reasonable voice-acting. – The same lines repeated every time you cast a spell. Grating.

LIFESPAN
Not that long and not that good. You won't play this for any great deal of time, unless you're absolutely mad on Potter. Or just mad.
MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
CHARLIE & CHOC FACTORY

IT'S WORSE THAN...
PRISONER OF AZKABAN

This is depressing. The Potter books and films are ideal game fodder, but this is a rigor mortis-inducingly tedious slog and the worst *Harry* title yet. A shame.

5/1

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The MON£Y $HOT
Some say it's Republican Propaganda but do those lily-livered pen-pushers know what it's like to be a Navy Seal on the front line? Eh?
PSM2 BRONZE AWARD
SPECTER
JESTER
KILLJOY
SIMPLE
x27/30
x2

"SOCOM ON FEEL THE NOISE"

SOCOM 3 U.S. NAVY SEALS

It's cornered the online market but is there actually a single-player experience here yet? Well...

SOCOM will be filed in the annals of videogame history (along with *Counter Strike*) under 'O', with a sub-reference to 'R'. That is to say, 'Online', with a 'Rubbish Single Player' tab. The third in this legendary series, unlike its expansion pack-like predecessor, has been rebuilt with a new engine, tarted up and enhanced. Zipper have obviously, desperately, spent their time trying to create an offline experience that mirrors its online brilliance. But have they delivered? File under 'N' for 'No'.

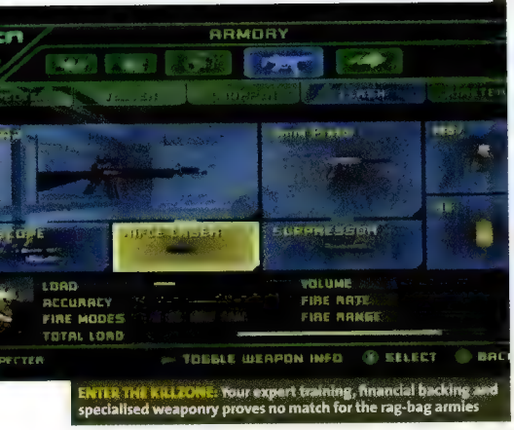
To be fair, they've had a bash. There's a tangible graphical leap that produces thick jungle bush in South Asia and top-notch urban settings in both Poland and North Africa. The maps are huge sprawling war-areas with loads of multiple routes and objectives you can complete in a number of ways. There are more vehicles than the Gumball Rally and enough weapons to arouse any wannabe soldier. But it's not what's been added that's the problem. It's what's been left in.

Dodgy squad AI. They veer from carrying out commands with ruthless efficiency to ignoring your most basic of requests randomly. A context-sensitive box flashes up at a door entrance and you send the order. They pile in, one after the other, checking the corners and neutralising any freedom-hating terrorist dumb enough to give the finger to the land of the free. Poetry in motion. And then you'll ask Bravo to take a position on the right flank. "Absolutely, Sir!" crackles through the

"YOUR SQUAD VEER FROM RUTHLESS EFFICIENCY TO IGNORING THE MOST BASIC OF REQUESTS RANDOMLY"

PIMP YOUR ARMOURY

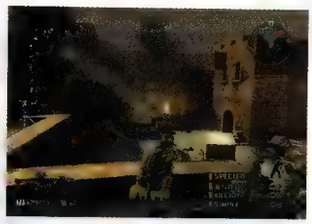
Yep, there's now a gazillion combinations of weapons for each solider, so you can choose the most appropriate tools for each missions. Although you can pick up enemy weapons, you're very much committed to what you take in and the specialists in the team can't really be relied upon. *SOCOM 3* cries out for a Conflict-style option to switch between characters and change tactics mid-game.

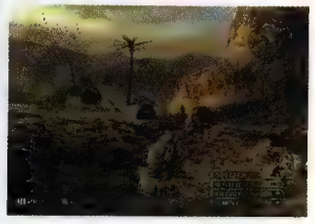


ENTER THE KILLZONE: Your expert training, financial backing and specialised weaponry proves no match for the rag-bag armies

TRIVBURST | PUBTALK | GAMEPIE | TOP 5 SEALS | ANSWER

WATERY DEATH: The combat boat features the fastest, hardest and most dangerous machine gun in gaming.

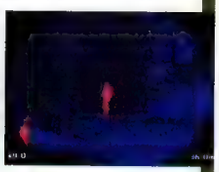




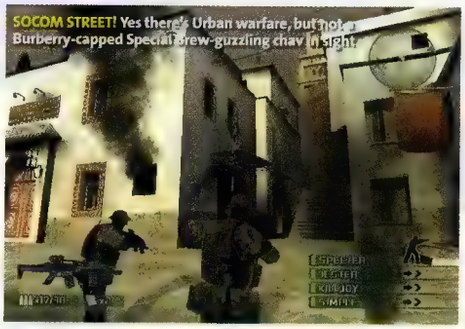
HIGH-TIMES: As ever, taking the high ground gives you the tactical advantage.

NIGHT VISION

SOCOM 3 **comes into its own during the night missions and really presses home your tactical and technical advantage over the ideologically 'off message'/ irresponsibly-led cannon fodder you'll come across. The huge array of customisable weaponry lets you attach pretty much anything to any gun. So when night falls, you can fix night-vision and thermal scopes to your heaters, making your previously hidden enemies light up like Christmas trees. And then you can blast them all to Hell and back. Excellent.**



ROAM IN THE DARK: Thermal and night vision help you check out the enemy unseen before blowing the oblivious scumbags away.



SOCOM STREET! Yes there's Urban warfare, but not a Burberry-capped Special Brew-guzzling chav in sight.

speaker and you charge up the other side. Then you notice that those little blue dots, your brothers in arms, are on the edge of the radar pointing their very expensive, very dangerous weapons at the privet hedge they're not supposed to be hiding behind any more. Cheers guys. Thanks a lot.

Inevitably this places more emphasis on your character than a squad shooter really should. If you want a job done properly, do it yourself. So it's a case of taking on entire armies practically single-handedly as you hope your crew can keep up and provide supporting fire with varying, yet ultimately unreliable, effectiveness.

Enemy AI has improved, though. They take intelligent cover, hunt in packs and react to your own movements. You'll have to watch the buggers too. A hit-sensitive system means if you shoot them in the legs, you'll put them down, only for them to survive and take another pop. This forces a contradiction. On the one hand you're encouraged to overwhelm enemies so you can take them prisoner and spare their blood. On the other, it's worth putting a shell into the skull of a seemingly-incapacitated enemy in case the dirty insurgent staggers to his feet and shoots you in the back.

JUST KEEP MOVING

Thankfully such moral inconsistencies are entirely absent from the vehicles, which bring arcade relief to proceedings. They're a lark to bomb about in but they do feel shallow – we'd rather see less focus on numbers and more on quality. The attack boat, for example, handles like a tin bath rather than an agile combat ship. Then there's the firing and moving problem. Whatever the vehicle, if you want to take down terrorists, you'll have to put on the handbrake or drop anchor and switch to your desired gun position. Surprisingly for members of one of the world's elite forces, your team-mates are inept at shooting people in front of them. So, just like in a real war, you have to park up in the middle of a battlefield, then switch to the gunner to take the best shot. Ridiculous.

If you couldn't plug this in and get online, then you'd be left with an average identi-kit shooter with flaws that gives as much as it takes. But online – if you can hack it – is a 32-player shooting experience with enlarged maps, all the vehicles and weapons from the single-player game and a couple of superb new game modes.

Convoy, for instance, splits combatants into two groups, with the terrorists needing to pick up and escape with supplies while the Seals stop them in which teamwork and vehicles are crucial. 'Control' has two teams racing across the map to place markers at various points in a mode that we suspect will be replicated everywhere soon.

Until *PES5*, *SOCOM* was the best – if not only – reason to get a network adapter. But if you're not online, there's little here that's not been done before. And done better. **Pete Webber**

■ **SOCOM 3** *is fighting evil in February.*

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Open level structure and tight controls. – Squad AI is a massive let-down.	+ Excellent jungle environments – Some blocky textures are monotonous	+ Orchestral score hits the right notes – Dreadful cockney accents.

LIFESPAN

If you've got a network adapter, how does forever sound? Solo, though, not for very long.

MINUTES ... FOREVER

IT'S BETTER THAN...

RAINBOW SIX LOCKDOWN

IT'S WORSE THAN...

ONLINE? PES5.

Online play would score high 80s, but offline *SOCOM 3* is an average squad shooter that treads the same tired path as many before it.

78

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Nippon Ichi
Publisher: Koei
Players: 1
Memory Save: 900kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer
"Makai means 'demon world' in Japanese but 'towards the sea' in Hawaiian."

GAMEPIE
30% Turning rocks into people.
20% Customising your characters.
50% Battling.

GAMEFAX
Strategy
RPG
Funny
Addictive

TRIVBURST
- Build factories shops and hospitals and then use them in battle.
- A wide variety of vehicles to commandeer on the battlefield.

The MON£¥ $HOT
The grid map movement of old is gone. You can move around freely – although the maps are still set out in grids, strangely.

GOING AWAY: Enjoy the main character at the beginning – it's the last you'll s[illegible] him for a bit.

"HOW HIGH ARE THIS POTATO'S DEFENCE POINTS?"

MAKAI KINGDOM:
CHRONICLES OF THE SACRED TOME

You can use a small shrub or a handy cabbage to create a character. Now that's customisation, folks.

It takes a certain type of person to be sucked into a strategy RPG. The sort that can spend several hours customising an army of characters without stepping onto the battlefield once. The type of gamer who, when faced with an *evil carrot* as an enemy, the first thought that passes through their head is "I wonder if it has a high resistance to wind spells?' Some of us at PSM2 are like that. We hide it well, but beneath our banter and pretence at caring about football, we secretly spend our evenings getting our brawlers and mages up to level 100 so we can kick some evil vegetable ass.

Our anti-hero, the self styled "frikkin' bad ass" overlord Lord Zetta, attempts to circumvent a prophecy by burning the very book that predicts his downfall. Instead he accidentally burns his own netherworld to the ground, only surviving by confining his body to the book. Oh, the irony. He then creates an army by confining souls to other inanimate objects, who fight on his behalf to build his new kingdom. Quite. When creating characters, it's vital to pick the objects you use wisely, as each can give different stat boosts. The character creation system is a mix of those from *Disgaea* and *Phantom Brave*, but doesn't have the depth of either.

HOME? A TOME: Being trapped inside a book makes it hard to battle through the netherworlds, ce.
Lord Zetta avoided destruction by trapping his soul in the Sacred Tome...
Man, that guy's harder to kill

GOOD HOSPITALITY

There are a few clever twists on what's gone before. You can now build various facilities like hospitals to place on the battlefield and house your characters, giving them additional stat boosts while the buildings remain standing. There are vehicles too, giving you greater room to move around and, once customised, they can be the difference between victory and defeat. The maps are much bigger as well, with unlockable areas that provide much-needed experience and items, especially since you can't level-up on free maps with the same ease as in previous games.

Without the same options to spend weeks creating über-build characters with which to race through story mode and with the ever dodgy clunky interface showing no signs of improvement, there's nothing here to get overexcited about, but for die-hard Nippon Ichi fans the introduction of vehicles and buildings will be something to suck up their every waking minute – at least in the short term. **Kirsten Kearney**

■ Makai Kingdoms *is out now.*

MY KINGDOM FOR A BIKE

There are cars and bikes dotted around, and being able to pile your characters into these vehicles and move them around on the maps can sometimes give you a big advantage over your opponent. For a start, the vehicle will take all the enemy damage before your characters begin to soak any up. Not only that, but they also have a wide variety of attacks of their own – lots of different weapons are available – and your character can jump out at any point to gain access to their own attacks if needs be. And, of course, you can move around the area much more freely in a vehicle. If used wisely they can make short work of bigger maps. Good stuff.

YOU'LL BIKE THIS: There are a wide variety of vehicles to use on the newly extended maps. Very nice.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ There are some great new twists. – Still the same shonky controls as ever.	+ Great battle moves. – The cutesy 2D sprite animations are wearing a bit thin.	+ Bouncy dungeon themes and hilarious voiceovers. – Gets a bit samey.

LIFESPAN
Fans will play the hell out of this, but it's not got the same pull as the original *Disgaea*.
MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
PHANTOM BRAVE

IT'S WORSE THAN...
DISGAEA

There's some interesting new elements here, but not enough to attract anyone other than Nippon Ichi devotees. If you're one of those, though, you'll go nuts.

83

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: Swordfish
Publisher: Ubisoft
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 49kb
Widescreen: Yes
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

GAMEFAX

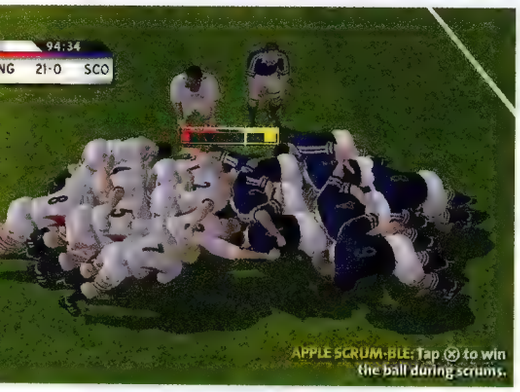
Sport | Multiplayer | Easy | Licenced

HERE'S MUD IN YOUR EYE: The game boasts an glittering array of licenses that EA would be proud of.
ECO 0-0 FRA
Chris Cusiter
Aurélien Rougerie

"IT TRIES, BUT NOT HARD ENOUGH"

RUGBY CHALLENGE 2006

It might be rugby but this game's certainly a bit challenged, no doubt about that.



Disappointingly for Ubisoft, many fans who became interested in rugby after England's World Cup success have jumped ship. Thanks to England's Ashes victory, cricket is the biggest sport in the country.

But it's the rugby fan that the French software company are targeting with their first ever sports release. One of the game's aims is to let players "learn and understand the rules of rugby". If someone buys this, though – call us crazy if you will – won't they already know the rules of rugby?

Translating complex gameplay broken up by scrums, rucks and line-outs isn't an easy task, but Swordfish have made a decent fist of it. Tapping ⊗ in time with an on-screen indicator gets your team to inch forward in scrums, while running with the ball, kicking and dummying are simple. This turns out to be the game's undoing, though, as in just ten minutes you'll be scoring tries with ease. In making the game accessible, Swordfish have dumbed it down and, as a result, *Rugby Challenge* is easy and unbelievable. **Richard Owen.**

■ Rugby Challenge 2006 *scrums down now.*

PSM2 VERDICT

Rugby Challenge 2006 is extremely accessible, yet just *too* straightforward. If this game was a self-help manual it would be called Rugby for Dummies.

64

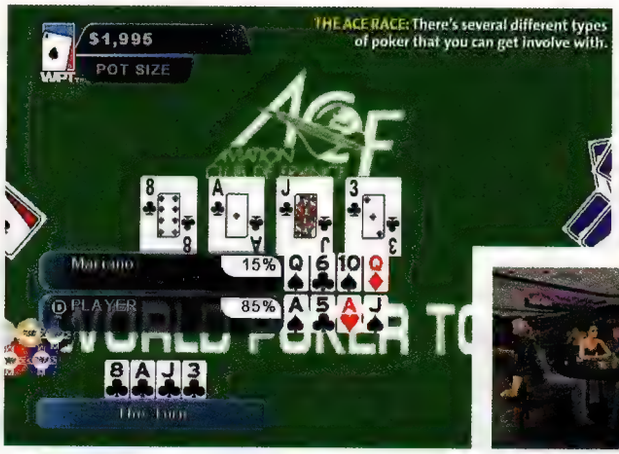
INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: Visual Concepts
Publisher: 2K Games
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 98kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

GAMEFAX

Shit | Multi-player | Strategy | Official License



"GAMBLING? A MUG'S GAME"

WORLD POKER TOUR

We'd rather have a 'flop' in the 'river' and be called a big 'queen'. Those are poker puns, by the way.

2K Sports have been replicating the televisual pizzazz and drama of the NBA and the NHL recently, but now they have turned their attention to one of least athletic of all televised 'sports' – world class professional poker. Christ, it'll be dominoes next.

Using the WPT license, they've brought all the showbiz of televised poker to the game – by this, we mean video footage of bingo-winged, bearded men in polo shirts punching the air. They place you as a poker rookie trying to make his way to the top of the tournaments. But if you're as much a poker novice as your character, it's tough. Due to the lack of a tutorial, *WPT* is not exactly the place for the Happy Families fan.

And that's the main problem with this game – it's only the experienced poker player that's going to get much out of it. But then, experienced poker players would rather save their skills for the real world or for fleecing drunk Americans online. The other problem with the game is the presentation. 2K Sports has created a 3D poker hall to play in, so you're playing against 3D AI opponents – who are horrific. They're like the Sims models that were rejected as 'too scary for the kiddies', who've now been let out of the attic to play poker.

They stare at you with eyes that have all the warmth of a corpse. And they stare at you, and stare at you, and just keep on staring at you, trying bore though you with their evil gimlet eyes. Even when the camera swings above the action, it's always with the *staring!* What do they want? Stop it. You're creeping us out. **Dave Harrison**

■ World Poker Tour *is out now.*

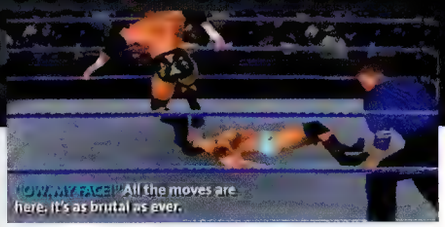
PSM2 VERDICT

Hard, pretty pointless and downright scary. Buy *GTA: San Andreas*, play a great game and then play the poker machines in Las Ventura. Much better.

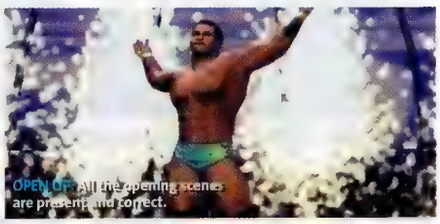
43

The MON£Y $HOT
Chris Benoit slaps the Crippler Cross-Face on Randy Orton. The Christer seems to be enjoying it, judging by that expression. A little too much...

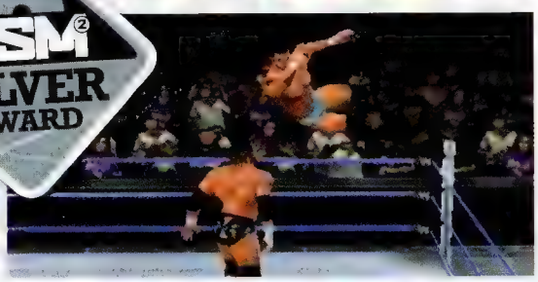
PSM2 SILVER AWARD



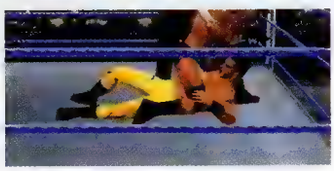
NOW MY FACE!! All the moves are here, it's as brutal as ever.



OPEN UP All the opening scenes are present and correct.



WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2006



Everything from PS2 squeezed down and crowbarred into your PSP. Wrestling fans, get ready to celebrate.

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Yukes
Publisher: THQ
Players: 1-4
Memory Save: 330kb

GAMEFAX
US Sports | Beat-'em-up | Hard | Network Play

TRIVBURST
- Everything that's in *SvR2006* on PS2 is here.
- With some new minigames as well.
- They're rubbish, though.
- But Jake Roberts is here too. Woo.

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"Including this one, there have now been 45 different WWE games across various different gaming platforms over the years. *45!*"

PSP has so far been mainly blessed – or cursed, depending on your viewpoint – with games that are basically ports of PS2 titles. *FIFA. PES. WipEout. Midnight Club.* And loads of others. All ported across, with varying degrees of success. And now comes *Smackdown! Vs Raw 2006*, and you could make a strong case for it being the most accurate PS2-to-PSP conversion yet.

Of course, we had a mild go at the latest WWE game on PS2 for being almost identical to its predecessors. Not a concern on PSP, however, which is desperately crying out for a decent beat-'em-up. And so for it to get a near spot-on conversion of *SvR2006* is something of a joy. Looks-wise, naturally, it's not quite so good, there's no commentary – a plus point as far as we're concerned – and the controls have been simplified a tiny little bit. Other than that, this is identical to its bigger brother, and, given that *WWE* is so pick-up 'n' playable, means this is great on PSP.

You get everything you'd expect – a huge roster of wrestlers (with Jake 'The Snake' Roberts added to the list), all the match types (including the new ones like the Casket Matches and Fulfil Your Fantasy), the management option, all the correct moves and finishers, the season mode – with identical stories to the PS2 version, so if you own that, you'll know everything that happens – a create-a-wrestler affair, Wi-Fi play and some extra game modes.

"EVER FANCIED PLAYING POKER AGAINST TAJIRI OR PAUL LONDON? NO, OF COURSE YOU HAVEN'T"

POKER-FACED

New game modes? Oh, yes – exciting news, certainly, until you realise that all three of them are utter rubbish. But at least they're there, right? *Right*? Anyway, the main 'excitement' comes from the game of Texas Hold 'Em Poker. Ever fancied gambling against the likes of Tajiri, Tazz or Paul London? No, of course you haven't. No-one's ever wanted that. But now you can, and you can use the D-pad to chuck in a variety of facial expressions – confusion, anger, delight – to try and trick your opponents. Wow. Next up is a rubbish trivia quiz, which might have worked OK – but once you've answered the question, you still have to wait for the timer to run down before you move on, meaning the whole thing takes longer than a stroll around the moon. And the less said about Eugene's Airplane Race (in which he runs around the ring pretending to be a Boeing 747) the better.

So, yes, it's the same as the PS2 version. Hurrah! If you're planning on buying this purely for story mode, but already own said PS2 outing, then think carefully. Otherwise, it's great and the best beat-'em-up on PSP. Not that there's a great deal of competition. **David Cook**

■ Smackdown! Vs Raw *is out now.*

MINI-LAMES

The new minigames, then. They're bilge. Poker is lacking all depth, the trivia quiz is tedious in the extreme, and Eugene's Airplane Race sees you stabbing at left and right on the D-pad, trying to keep the fool balanced while he sprints around doing a plane impression. What in the name of Jamelia is the point of all this?

FASHION VICTIM: Judging by that jacket, Triple H shops at Matalan. This poker game is rubbish.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ The same as the PS2 version, therefore good. – No new story mode means no surprises.	+ Very nice. All the grapplers are recognisable. – Is it us, or do the wrestlers have weird mouths?	+ No irritating commentary. All the wrestlers' theme tunes are in here. – Nothing to moan about.

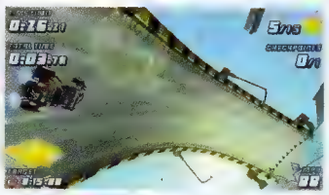
LIFESPAN
You should play this for ages – stacks of wrestlers to unlock, huge story modes, Wi-Fi... all you need, really.
MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
MARVEL NEMESIS

IT'S WORSE THAN...
SMACKDOWN VS RAW PS2

The new minigames are a bit rubbish, but there's basically no reason for PSP-owning WWE fans not to get this. Finally, PSP gets itself a decent fighting game. About time too.

85



INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: Sidhe Interactive
Publisher: Ubisoft
Players: 1-4
Memory Save: 320KB

GAMEFAX

Driving · Original · Network Play · Hard

GRIPSHIFT

Until Wi-Fi *Mashed* comes along, this'll do just nicely, thanks.

Any game that sees you restarting certain stages over and over again is treading a fine line between being addictive or annoying. Take *GripShift* for example – guiding your tiny car around a pile of twisting tracks suspended in mid-air is great when you get it right, but you'll need at least thirty restarts and even more curse words before you nail it. Fortunately, when things go well, you begin to reap the enjoyment from this little racer.

GripShift comes packed to the spoilers with a stack of car-based action. After choosing and customising your motor (the usual decals, paint jobs and chassis styles are available), there are straightforward battle races (think *Mashed*'s power-ups), minigames (including an addictive ten-pin bowling game where the skittles are penguins) and a full blown Challenge mode (with a mix of race competitions and time trials) to work through. So yeah, it's more or less what you'd expect from your typical racer. But *GripShift* handles like no other. It gives a whole new meaning to the term 'air brakes' as you can perform aerial handbrake turns and stops, which is sometimes the difference between tumbling into the ether and placing first.

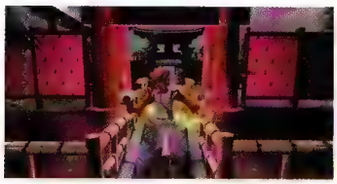
For addictiveness alone, *GripShift* is rivalled only by *Lumines*. It can be absolutely maddening at times, but this is one game that drives on the right side of that aforementioned fine line. **Nathan Irvine**

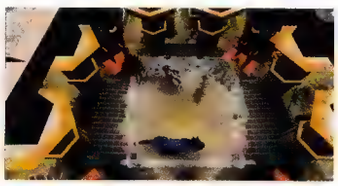
■ *GripShift has already skidded into a store near you. Go check it out.*

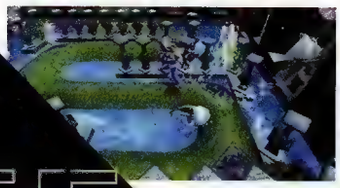
PSM2 VERDICT

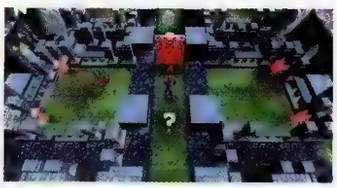
It's simple to pick up and play, but difficult to master. Thankfully there's a massive range of things to do and each one of them is just as addictive as the last. It's well worth a look.

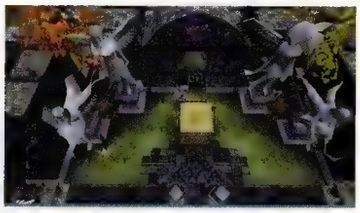
78











INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: Killer Game
Publisher: Ubisoft
Players: 1
Memory Save: 128KB

GAMEFAX

Puzzle · Film Tie-in · Hard · Shit

FRANTIX

The best thing about this game is the cartoon that you get on the disc.

That's right. Crowbarred into this turgid puzzle adventure is a brilliant animated film, which is actually funny and everything, and much more entertaining than the game. It's even advertised on the cover to try and get people to actually buy the thing. Yep, the film is great. And the game is utter rubbish. So what's wrong with it? Erm, everything. Well, pretty much.

Frantix is like a 3D version of *Pac-Man*, but more complex and less fun. You guide your characters (one of which is Meeper, the star of the aforementioned film) around various mazes, dodging creatures (foxes, goblins that sort of thing) and collecting gems against a ticking clock. Simple. Or at least it would be if the camera were a bit more intuitive and didn't force you to switch views *all the bloody time*.

It's not just the camera that's shoddy, the whole feel of *Frantix* is equally quick 'n' easy. No matter how unique each level looks, they still operate in the same uninspiring way. Moving feels like you're skipping across stepping-stones rather than roaming around gracefully. Pushing boxes (but not pulling – cue annoying moments when you accidentally push them into a wall) to activate switches has been done to death, and being drowned by quicksand or water is just another unoriginal idea in an altogether unoriginal game.

Even the most ardent puzzle fan will find *Frantix* tiresome. It feels soulless, plays dreadfully and not even the cartoon makes it palatable. You'd have to be insanely frantic to want this. **Nathan Irvine**

■ *Frantix is, sadly, in shops right now.*

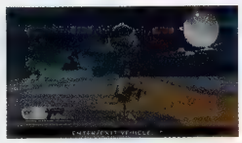
PSM2 VERDICT

We'd rather play *Smart Bomb* (PSM#66, 36%) than this. At least it was trying something new. *Frantix* is a fruitless experience and the worst game on PSP so far.

20

PSM2 SILVER AWARD

The MON£Y $HOT
Swooping into an enemy ship, planting explosives on the grounded star-fighters and then flying out of the hanger while they blow-up behind you. Brilliant.



WARS GOING ON?

PSP's version of *Battlefront 2* comes with three unique challenge modes. Rebel Raider sees you collecting as much contraband as possible in a set time limit, Imperial Enforcer is a blast-fest where you've got to annihilate everything on the map, again against a time limit, and Rogue Assassin allows you to play as a hitman – plugging the main targets that are scattered across the battlefield. All in all, these modes are quite refreshing, certainly good fun and are a good incentive for you to invest in a copy of this game.

END OF THE ROGUE? Not if you can shoot this fella quick enough. Then the next twenty or so.

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: Pandemic
Publisher: Activision
Players: 1-4
Memory Save: 128KB

GAMEFAX

Action | Official License | Film Tie-In | Addictive

TRIVBURST

- PSP exclusive campaigns such as Rebel Raider, Imperial Enforcer and Rogue Assassin.
- Play as Jedis, such as Yoda, and battle across Mustafar and Kashyyyk.
- Take on up to four of your buddies via the medium of Wi-Fi play.

PUBTALK

The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"The original Obi Wan Kenobi, Alec Guinness, reportedly hated working on Star Wars so much he suggested that his character was killed off in the first film. Blimey."

STARWARS BATTLEFRONT 2

Star Wars fans rejoice! The force is with this handheld padawan.

Just when you thought you'd had your fill of Star Wars games, up pops a portable version of *Battlefront 2* (80% in PSM2#69). Thankfully, it's managed to maintain *most* of the magic from the PS2 incarnation and comes packed with a few little extras – despite niggling controls and one obvious omission.

To recap for those unfamiliar with the series – you control one solider in various gung-ho missions where the objectives range from controlling key territory (like classic board game Risk, but with Star Wars planets like the home of the Wookies – Kashyyyk) to plain ol' killing of the opposition. If you die, you respawn until you don't have any members left or time runs out. Simple. But as well as the ominous – yet pretty boring – foot-soldiers, you get to wield light-sabre death with Jedis such as Yoda and Anakin. You can even maim rebel plebs with Darth Vader. Whatever you fancy.

Like the PS2 version, space battles are the key addition, completing a fan-pleasing range of hi-octane speeders, lumbering but powerful AT-AT's and, of course, X-Wings. And there are more blasters and bombs here than in Boba Fett's tool-shed – all of which work fantastically well on PSP. Even though wonky aiming sometimes negates the effect of slow but powerful weapons. But there's also PSP exclusive single-player challenges (see Wars Going On box).

The compulsory Wi-Fi link-up delivers a four-way frenzy – a shade empty after the 24-player online battles of PS2 – although there's a whiff of lag every now and again. But, *c'mon*.

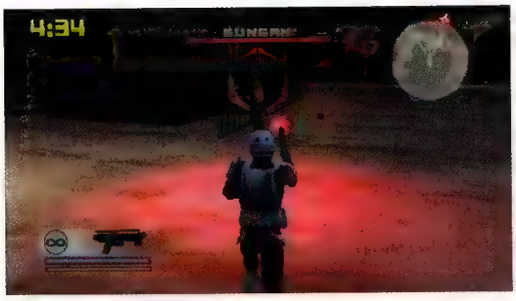
BUTTON IT

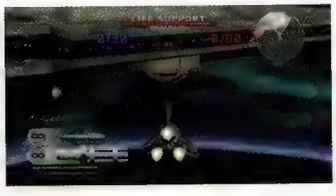
Battlefront 2 handles pretty well, but suffers from the same problems as all PSP FPS's – the lack of a second analogue stick. But even though it feels *so* wrong to to aim using the face pad buttons, you get used to it quickly. There's even a handy lock-on system to assist your shooting – it's especially helpful when zapping little Ewoks to hell. We reccomend the Retro set up to minimise problems.

Sadly, PS2's excellent Rise of the Empire mode has been cut, and the structure's inherently repetitive – but ideal for five minute bursts. And there are some frame-rate issues during hectic fire-fights. Quibbles aside, *Battlefront 2* is a joy and not *just* for blinkered fanboys. Like Yoda, it might be small, but the force is strong with this one. **Nathan Irvine**

■ Battlefront 2 *is out now*

"MORE BLASTERS AND BOMBS THAN IN BOBA FETT'S SHED. IT ALL WORKS FANTASTICALLY WELL ON PSP"





PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Frantic gung-ho action depicts Star Wars very well. – It can become samey all too quickly.	+ Lush environments and vast draw distances – There are some clipping issues and slowdown	+ Nothing beats the rousing score of a Star Wars game – A lack of explosions and atmosphere.

LIFESPAN
There are plenty of set battles to work through and the chance to set-up wireless battles with friends. Nice.
MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
PURSUIT FORCE

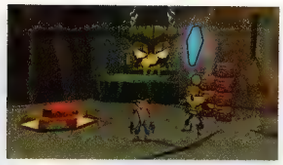
IT'S WORSE THAN...
LIBERTY CITY STORIES

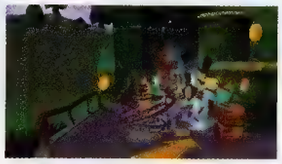
Frame rate and control quibbles aside, it's like holding the Star Wars universe in your hands – staggering. With a few more extras this would've been a Jedi Master, not a promising apprentice.

80

CROSSHAIR PJE: When two carts become one, you have the option of driving or shooting.

CRASHES TO CRASHES: You can stay together right to the end, then betray your partner. Ha!





INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: Radical Entertainment
Publisher: Vivendi
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 184kb

GAMEFAX

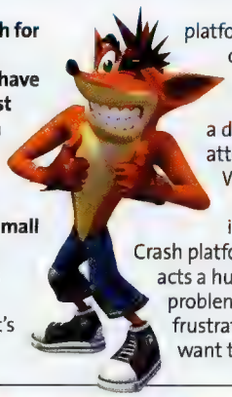
Racing · Platformer · Network Play · For Kids

CRASH TAG TEAM RACING

If Crash has still got it where it counts, then he's certainly hiding it really, really well.

The career path for platforming heroes goes: have successful first game, follow it up with a sequels, then finally, when the joints can't double-jump no more, ease those bones into a small car for a mini-kart game.

Mario's done it, Jak is doing it right now, and Crash has done it *twice*. It's a kart game and a platformer rolled into one. You could look at it as a brave subvertion of the genre. Or you could look at it as a desperate and lonely cry for attention from a has-been. We reckon it's the latter.



The one-player game is weird, as it involves Crash platforming round a world that acts a hub to the racing tracks. The problem with this is that it's frustrating because on PSP you want to dive into the action and this game manages to hide all the racing from you. You have to collect coins, crystals and talk to big headed no-marks, all before you can get a sniff of a kart.

Instead, everything needs to be 'unlocked'. This is especially annoying because the racing is actually pretyy good. It's even got a contrived novelty bit where your cart combines with an opponent to make a super kart, but on whole it suits the small screen PSP well, but is slower and less detailed than the full-on PS2 version.

And why the platforming bits? Give it a rest, Crash. **Dave Harrison**

■ Crash Tag Team Racing *is out now.*

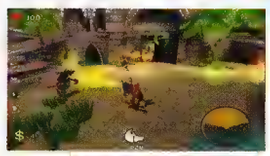
PSM VERDICT

Another strike for Crash. An OK mini-racing game smothered by an annoying platforming hub. It's like Crash is trying to hide something from you. Let us at the racing – it's good.

65

HOLY KAO: This is Kao. How we hate him. And yet his new game is quite good. Madness.

DEMI ME DIE: Hat look at Kao get fried by the laser beams. He deserves this.



HELLO INFANTS: Kao's in some sort of fiery hell place here. Let's hope he stays there.

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: Tate Interactive
Publisher: Atari
Players: 1-4
Memory Save: 128kb

GAMEFAX

Platformer · Easy · For Kiddies · Network Play

KAO CHALLENGERS

It's the most hackneyed, contrived platformer we've played in ages. But we quite like it. No, let us explain...

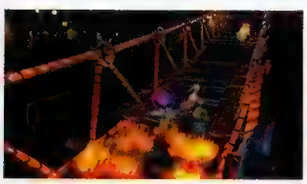
We all like things against our better judgement – Big Brother for example, Keane, egg sandwiches, dressing as ladies – but *Kao Challengers* is a platformer that doesn't just take the biscuit, it grabs the packet and goes a full tube of Jaffas right in front of your face.

On the surface, see, there shouldn't be anything to like about it. For a start, it doesn't have an original bone in its body. Forest levels? Lava lands? Ice worlds? Christ, at least *Death Jr* was based on *death*. It stars – gnngh – a 'hip and trendy' (he goes *snowboarding*) kangaroo wearing boxing gloves. His main weapons are boomerangs *which don't even come back*, so in reality are little more than bent sticks. There doesn't, at first glance, seem to be anything for it other than to give *Kao* a kicking.

But the thing is, although it nicks ideas from all over the place – bouncing off pinball bumpers like Sonic, donning a flying cap like Mario – and it doesn't do any of them at all badly. It really doesn't. And it's not long before you find yourself actually enjoying it. You'll be bounding across platforms like, well, a kangaroo. You'll be sprinting away (in an into-the-screen job) from a massive yeti. You'll be riding down the rapids in a barrel (just like *Tak 2*). And you'll be lobbing nuts at tree branches to make them fall into the water as handy stepping stones. And it's fun. It genuinely is. Plus, it's got a stack of Wi-Fi modes, from death-matches, to car racing, to, erm, one in which each player tries to nab a chicken head and be the one who wears it longest. Yes.

The character is hateful. The landscapes are platformer-by-numbers. And it's too easy. But – God – we quite like it. It's the best platformer on PSP, not that that's much of an achievement. And we think it's worth buying. Jeez, we must be going soft. **David Cook.**

■ Kao Challengers *is out now.*

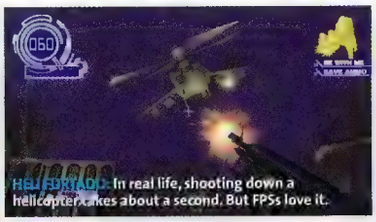


PSM VERDICT

Kao Challengers is detestable in every way except the one that actually matters – whether it's fun or not. And it undeniably is. Just make sure none of your mates see you buying it.

69

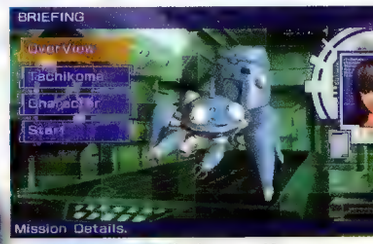
MOTOKO OH NO: Not as pretty as the anime version, is she? *And* she keeps her top on.


HELI FORTAOI: In real life, shooting down a helicopter takes about a second. But FPSs love it.

JOHNNY CASHPOT: Another sterling decision from the auto lock-on, there. Cheers.

LITTLEST ROBO

Ever wanted your own miniature tank? Mm-hm. Ever wanted a bright blue one that talks like a helium-filled Hilary Duff, displays all the emotional stability of a mad toddler and is equipped with several machine guns? Well, that's exactly what you get in *Ghost In The Shell*. There are four to choose from, each with different ports for slotting gatling cannons and rocket launchers onto. Trouble is, in the show – what with being a kung-fu cyborg – Major Motoko can do things the Tachikoma can't. Here, she's a desperate second fiddle. Shame.



TACHI BREAKY HEART: **If only you could buy a better voice. Johnny Cash's, say.**

126
The MON£Y $HOT
You're sneaking around a group of terrorists, knowing a false move means a dead hostage, when... 'I've located the enemy!' whoops Tachikoma. Bang.
HOSTAGE
BE WITH ME
SAVE AMMO
LOCK ON
02

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Bandai
Publisher: Atari
Players: 1-6
Memory Save: 410Kb

GAMEFAX
Official License
Easy
Shit
Shoot-'em-up

TRIVBURST
- 51 weapons to find and collect.
- Voiceovers from the original actors.
- Nothing like the animated series in any way whatsoever.

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"The title's a reference to The Ghost in the Machine, a concept originally used by British philosopher Gilbert Ryle. Pint?"

GHOST IN THE SHELL STAND ALONE COMPLEX

Yes, it'll make you cry – but no, not for its heart-rending insight into the nature of the soul...

Ghost In The Shell – the film – is great. Part chilling look at the moral ramifications of cloning, artificial intelligence and cyber-enhancement, part insane kung-fu shoot-em-up, it's inspired a 26-part anime series, some disturbing internet fan art and every good bit from the entire Matrix trilogy. And the lead character's a lady-borg who constantly takes her clothes off.

Ghost In The Shell – the game – is not so great. Part tedious first-person shooter, part irritating mish-mash of game styles that it doesn't tackle very well, And the lady-borg doesn't take her top off at all, ever.

First-person shooters are difficult to pull off on PSP, and *Shell* certainly struggles. Movement's done on the analogue nub with symbol buttons for aiming – with, insanely, no 'Invert Look' option – but there's a thoughtful 'lock-on' mode included to make this slightly wonky setup easier. Unfortunately, this won't work beyond a gun's effective range – usually about a third of the distance you're trying to shoot – and what the lock-on chooses to shoot seems arbitrary. It's certainly a lot less efficient than, say, leaving everything to your Tachikoma, the child-voiced mini-tank that follows you around in every mission. Left to their own devices, they'll do ninety percent of the shooting for you, squealing with delight as they mow down hordes of people. The only trouble is, although you can set their general behaviour, you can't actually give them direct orders – so it's impossible to tell them to take cover, and they'll often ignore health packs.

"LEAVE EVERYTHING TO THE MINI-TANK THAT FOLLOWS"

GREY PRIDE

By the way, you might have noticed how grey it all looks. *Ghost In The Shell*'s probably the greyest, most crate-intensive game we've ever played. You might argue that this is to do with the nature of Shell itself – the series is short on meadows – but then, you might argue that Shell also includes lashings of ultra-violence, characters that can somersault thirty feet through the air, enemies that 'hack' civilians and a scary logo-faced villain called The Laughing Man. *Stand Alone Complex* has some men in balaclavas and a lot of stairs. Avoid. Please. **Joel Snape**

■ *Ghost In The Shell is out now.*

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Having a toddler-tank to back you up is nice. – But it's unpredictable like a Ritalin baby.	+ The models of the main characters are all right. – The rest of the game's a symphony of grey flatness.	+ All the voice actors from the American version. – "I've located the enemy!" Have you, tank? Really?

LIFESPAN
Five grey hours for the main game – and where are you seriously going to find five mates to play against?
MINUTES

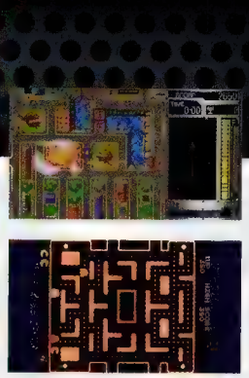
IT'S BETTER THAN...
RENGOKU

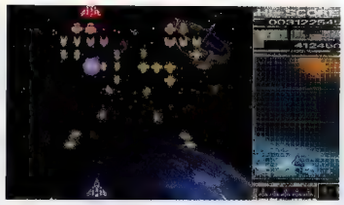
IT'S WORSE THAN...
CODED ARMS

The TV series is a brilliant mix of super-violence, brilliant ideas, frightening cyber-visions of the future and clever bits. This is a barely-passable FPS. Get the box-set of the series instead.

5.0

COMPLETE PAC: Here's *Pac-Man* for the year 2005, complete with sort-of 3D graphics and flowers.





DON'T DUG YOURSELF: Surely this isn't what PSP is about?

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: Radical Entertainment
Publisher: Sony
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 102kb

GAMEFAX

Budget | Old Skool | Shit | Network Play

NAMCO MUSEUM BATTLE COLLECTION

Look at the state of this. Some of these games are so old, they belong in a museum. Oh...

The a problem with retro gaming is that after you've played that favourite childhood game for about ten minutes, your rose-tinted specs shatter and fire splinters into your eyes. That game you used to call 'fun' is now just 'crap'.

You might persevere with it for a bit longer as you're probably frightened and confused – has your memory been lying to you? Was your childhood ever happy? Are you repressing something? But it's really that retro games aren't very good – that's why they made better games.

And then we have PSP – a cutting edge handheld that should be responsible for a new dawn of gaming and, thanks to *Namco Battle Collection*, allows you to play... *Pac-Man*. Not exactly the Brave New World that Sony promised is it?

Strangely, this coming together of old and new kinda works. Here you have games only bearable for short spurts of time played on a format which suits short spurts of gaming. But if you're looking for any sort of substance, you're out of luck.

There's a total of 20 games, 16 of these being arcade classics and four 'remixed' versions of Rally-X, Dig Dug, Pac-Man and Galaga, which just have prettier graphics. This would smack of value if it wasn't for the fact the only a quarter are worth playing. *Galaga*, *Xevious*, *Galaxian* and even *Pac-Man* can hold your interest, but *Mappy? Tower of Druaga? Rolling Thunder?* Without meaning to be harsh but who gives monkey's about any of them?

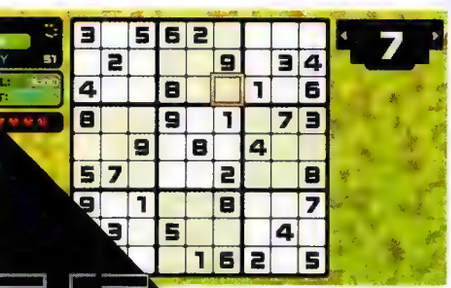
While *NMBC* isn't hideous or insulting, it just seems a bit unnecessary, and to be honest, lazy. Now will you please quit with the retro compilations and realise that PSP deserves better. **Dave Harrison**

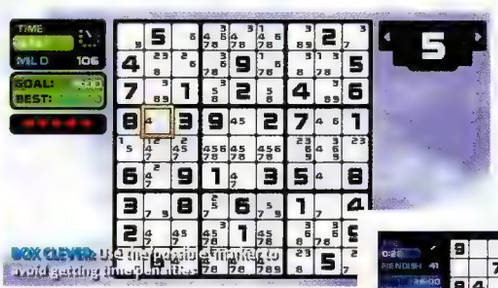
■ Namco Museum *is out now.*

PSM2 VERDICT

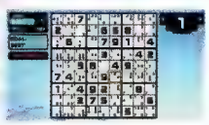
Plenty of games but very little choice, just different shades of old-skool tedium. *Namco Museum Battle Collection* only has novelty value – and that wears off rapidly.

54




BOX CLEVER: Use the puzzle timer to avoid getting time penalties.

COUNT SUDOKU: There are over 500 different puzzles to be getting on with.



INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: Sumo Digital Ltd
Publisher: Sony
Players: 1-4
Memory Save: 512KB

GAMEFAX

Puzzle | Wi-Fi Play | Addictive | Easy

GO! SUDOKU

It's the game that pushes your PSP's technical abilities to the very limits. Oh, sorry, that's *Burnout*. Our mistake.

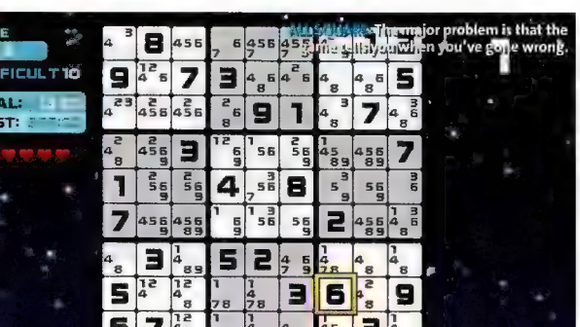
Stupidly popular with wine-guzzling Sunday Times readers and Carol Vorderman, Sudoku is a deceptively difficult Japanese number puzzle. Your aim is to fill a grid of nine boxes – each split into a further nine boxes – with the numbers one to, er, nine, making sure that no box, column or row contains the same digit twice. Though you probably knew all that.

Go! Sudoku uses the same rules. L1 and R1 scroll the list of numbers and ⊗ enters your selection into a square. It also adds such soothing music and enticing visual effects to this simple set-up – complete a square and watch some coloured lights explode – that it regularly left us hypnotised with concentration. Or, at least, it did until we uncovered the game's single – but major – flaw.

Put a number in the wrong slot and it turns red. You also suffer a two-minute penalty, added to the clock in the top left corner of the screen. But sod the clock, though, and you can work through the whole grid, trial and error style, finding the right square for each number. You'd have to be some sort of baby-minded idiot to do that, but even if you're not, you can't ignore *Go! Sudoku* pointing out every mistake you make, rendering it all a bit pointless. It's like taking part in a pub quiz where the quizmaster peers over your shoulder, trying not to snigger every time you get a question wrong.

Go! Sudoku is addictive and well presented, but even with hundreds of different puzzles, it's never much of a challenge. Shame. **Ben Richardson**

■ Go! Sudoku *is out now.*


MISTAKES: The major problem is that the game tells you when you've gone wrong.

PSM2 VERDICT

60

***Go! Sudoku* makes a decent job of jumping on the Sudoku trend-wagon, but then screws it all up by constantly interfering and not letting you work the puzzles out for yourself. Balls.**

COPS AND MODDERS: Be the law. Chase street racers and... reduce their energy bars.

The MON£¥ $HOT
The car still very much is the star of this mini *Most Wanted*. Take a perfectly decent car and transform it into modded monstrosity. Ah that's better.

TUNER STEAKOUT

Reason for buying *NFS: Most Wanted* PSP number one: At last you can play as the cops and get your own back on those troublesome modders who keep racing around your (conveniently circular) city streets. And there are even a choice of police cars to go into battle with. Sexy... The joy of watching a field of rattled racers peg it as you close in on them is actually pretty funny, so it's just a shame therefore that the actual 'battling' element of these so-called 'Tuner Takedowns' involve giving other cars a couple of nudges until the power bars hastily added above them wear down.

MONTE CAR-LO OR BUST: It sounds exciting, but in actuality it's something else. Boring.

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: EA
Publisher: EA
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 160kb

GAMEFAX
Driving
Sequel
On-rails
Easy

TRIVBURST
- Multi-player races over WiFi. And they work.
- Upgrades and modding options. Not enough though.
- A stable of real cars from the full-size game.

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"Electronic Arts used to own the rights to Ferrari cars in videogames. If you wanted to use Ferrari you had to pay EA. Madness."

NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED

Break out the EA miniaturisation ray for the fifteenth time this month. It's another PS2-to-PSP downgrade.

We love *Need for Speed: Most Wanted*. Last month we described the PS2 version as "the state of the art street-racing sim". The frame-rate might be a bit iffy at times, the grimy graphics and weather effects might make it look a little muddy occasionally, but as far as game structure, freedom to do what you want when you want and Hollywood presentation goes, it's absolutely unbeatable. So what does the PSP version of *Most Wanted* do? Take out all the structure, freedom and presentation. Good move.

What we're left with is, basically, the rest of *Need for Speed: Most Wanted*: a series of racing events that you must complete in order to earn the rights to go up against 15 ever tougher members of the Most Wanted 'blacklist'. Make it to the top to become the 'Most Wanted' and 'win the game'.

Sounds great, but while on PS2 this involved scooting around a massive city, getting into trouble, finding races, earning 'respect' and having a good time, it really is just a series of menu options on PSP. Do the required races and race a boss. Unlock access to the next boss and his/her challenges. Do them. And so on.

The tuning and pimping options are strimmed down from PS2's already basic options (both games feature far less tweakage than *NFS Underground 2*, for example) and the AI – and specifically the cop AI – that makes the PS2 game so interesting is inept. Police chases involve random side-swipes interspersed with them blindly *following you*. It's all a bit of a letdown after the PS2 squad's attempts to block and box you. Which just makes their random appearance in the game and annoying intervention in the races even more annoying. In the full-size game the cops felt like a real part of the fun. Here they're an add-on that gets on your wick – like having crash barriers and bridges that'll randomly nudge you as you try and race by.

GOOD LOOKIN'

Looks-wise the game holds up well next to last year's *Rivals*, but the sacrifices in keeping a decent level of smoothness seem to have involved a lot of the trackside detail. Too often we were driving down a snake of undulating tarmac with conveniently view-obscuring crash barriers barricading in the action. And why did we feel like we were driving radio controlled cars instead of full-size ones? Was it the high-pitched buzzy sound FX? The boxy simple look of the cars? Or the sharp, unrealistic, feel-free nature of the handling?

"WE FELT LIKE WE WERE IN RADIO-CONTROLLED CARS, NOT REAL ONES"

Perhaps the biggest problem is the same that one that troubled the PS2 game – EA already do a better game: *Burnout*. Doh. **Daniel Griffiths**

■ *NFS: Most Wanted* is out now.

GOLD HARRAS: The artificial-feeling AI means that other cars can drive into you like idiots.

PSM² VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Massively simple and easy to comprehend. – Lacking any kind of depth whatsoever.	+ Decent enough for PSP and better than *NFS: Rivals*. – Repetitive scenery makes races lengthy and dull.	+ The usual wealth of tedious college rock. – The cars sound like rattled jars of angry bees.

LIFESPAN
Play through the blacklist, try multi-player and dig into the minigames. There's plenty – but it's all a bit lacking.
MINUTES — YEARS

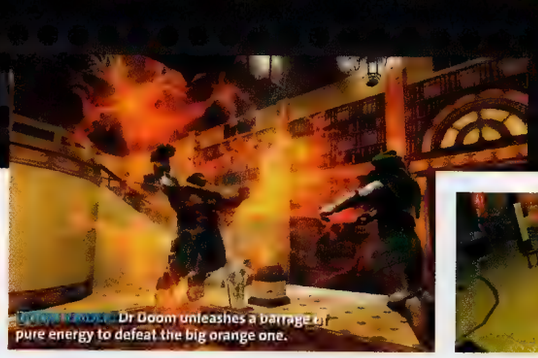
IT'S BETTER THAN...
FIRED-UP

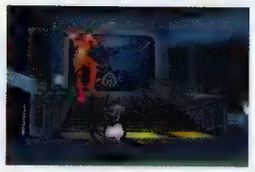
IT'S WORSE THAN...
BURNOUT LEGENDS

They couldn't fit in the PS2 version so they built-up the cop car bits of the game. Nice idea but the chinks in the AI, graphics and handling armour will be apparent from your first race to your last.

68

HALF-PINT OF SPIDER: The PSP game is smaller by removing the chaff of the PS2 game.


DOOM TO YOU: Dr Doom unleashes a barrage of pure energy to defeat the big orange one.



INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: EA
Publisher: EA
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 160KB

GAMEFAX

Beat 'em-up
Superhero
Network Play
On-Rails

MARVEL NEMESIS RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS

Mildly great news, everyone – EA's ultra-lame superhero game gets better the smaller they make it.

This is more like it. The PSP version of *Marvel Nemesis* has been stripped of the monotonous scrolling beat-'em-up element of its PS2 brother and replaced it with a straight toe-to-toe slugfest involving some of the greatest comic characters ever. (Plus EA's gaggle of company-created needle-armed nobodies.) However, despite the much-needed streamlining, it's still – how should we say – imperfect.

The variety of attacks – or lack of it – is restricted solely to ⊗ (your basic strikes, which all feel decidedly flea-weight) and ▣ (repetitive throw for objects and opponents alike). Regardless of whether you're playing as the nimble Spider-Man or the bulky Thing, differentiating between the two is sadly impossible. Yes, they look different and ol' Spidey's got a web firing ability, but when it comes to trading blows, each fella just feels the same. And that's clearly wrong. They do have special moves (like The Thing's power-clap, activated with R1) but they don't really make a huge difference to the shoeing you're giving out.

However, while feeling distinctly samey throughout, *Marvel Nemesis* does look lush on the small screen. And that's partly thanks to the close-in camera that limits your view of the sprawling stages – not ideal when you've just served up a meaty uppercut and sent your opponent spinning off the screen and into the air. Good job you can use L1 to lock-on and continue the pummelling when they hit the deck again.

But while *Marvel Nemesis* has become a straightforward one-on-one scrapper, it now feels even more shallow. You can fight your way through with each of the 18 superheroes, but the story remains the same boring 'aliens attack Earth' business. So yes, it's better on PSP – and that's certainly a relief – but it couldn't really have got any worse, could it? **Nathan Irvine**

■ Marvel Nemesis: Rise Of The Imperfects *is out now.*

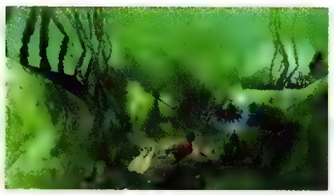
PSM2 VERDICT

Although it's not doing anything we've not seen before, *Marvel Nemesis* is just about OK. The fighting is solid enough, but it's massively limited in terms of variety.

5.8

MEIN CAMP: The campsite's on fire! Run, Harry, run like the wind! Etc.

FATHER'S DAY: This is Ron's dad. He pops up to give advice in the early stages.



BORED OF THE RINGS: Yes, it does look a bit dull, doesn't it? And it doesn't get any better.

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: EA
Publisher: EA
Players: 1-3
Memory Save: 173kb

GAMEFAX

For Kids
Network Play
Film Licence
Sequel

HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE

Could it be magic? No, of course it couldn't.

Over the last few months, you'll have noticed our feelings towards PSP – or its games, at least – have cooled from 'boiling' to, at best, 'tepid like a two-day old bath', with only *GTA* really exciting us. And it's games like *Harry Potter* that are to blame – hastily converted from PS2 to PSP, with little or no thought as to the differences between platforms.

What PSP *needs* is more puzzlers, platformers and beat-'em-ups. Games you can pick up, play a level or two, and then put down again, but can also drag you under for ages if you've the time. What is *doesn't* need are slogs like *Harry Potter*, where each stage lasts for ages and is so boring that making suggestive eyes at the skinhead sat opposite you on the train would prove less painful.

See, this is *exactly* the same as *Goblet Of Fire* on PS2, so what you're getting is this – spells that are context-sensitive, meaning puzzles can be solved entirely by wandering up to an obstacle and pressing ▣; levels that are dark, gloomy, re-use huge areas of scenery over and over again and are totally devoid of personality; no ability to flip between the teen wizards mid-game and a mission structure that insists you collect a certain amount of shields to open the next stage, condemning you to trudging round earlier levels in an effort to collect enough guff to move on. Though there is a great dragon chase sequence.

If you've got *Goblet Of Fire* on PS2, this version is utterly redundant. If you haven't, well, it's still not worth buying. It's the laziest of cash-in ports, shunted over to PSP without a care, and should be left clogging up the shop shelves. **David Cook**

■ Goblet Of Fire *is out now.*

PSM2 VERDICT

Just like its bigger brother, this is a tedious, empty trudge around landscapes that lack any of the films' magic. It's exactly the same as on PS2, therefore deserves exactly the same mark.

5.1

"ON TOP OF THE WORLD"

WAR OF THE WORLDS

Spielberg and Cruise are here to save the world from alien invasion...

Watch the skies – the aliens are coming! No, we don't mean star Tom Cruise's obsession with Scientology, we're talking Steven Spielberg's version of HG Wells' classic invasion tale. The Beard and The Cruise kicked into high gear to shoot War Of The Worlds as fast as they could, yet it doesn't show – this is, despite some problems, an effective blockbuster. We all know the concept... Marauding monstoids from another world (but not Mars, as in Wells' book) have been studying our culture and have decided to invade. In this new adaptation, they've conveniently buried huge battle tripods with which to stalk the Earth, obliterating all opposition. Against this background, we're introduced to Ray Ferrier, a divorced dad who sees his kids as more of a burden on his bachelor life than a blessing. Guess what happens when the evil ETs launch their attack? That's right – Ray has to become a hero. And just in time, too – because everyone else is only out for themselves. Which leads to some effectively tense scenes as the struggling survivors clash over cars, food and the best plan for defeating the alien menace.

"THE CGI BODS OUTDO THEMSELVES WITH SPECTACULAR CARNAGE AND DESTRUCTION"

PUSHING BOUNDARIES

Spielberg's rustled up an intense, moody, often dark story of humanity on the brink of extinction. Which is all well and good – except he can't resist giving into his schmaltzy side once too often. Scary moppet Dakota Fanning is fine as his cute daughter, but Justin Chatwin is saddled with a typical Kevin The Teenager stroppy role. And he's also responsible for an ending so cheesy it smells of Edam. It's not in the way the invaders are defeated – that's pure Wells – but after that, well... Still, the CGI bods outdo themselves with spectacular scenes of carnage and destruction, including the awesome aftermath of a plane brought down by one of the tripods and the climactic clash as the army goes up against the massive machines. The scale and the spectacle of all this is enough to make it a must-buy.

STARRING
- Tom Cruise
- Dakota Fanning
- Justin Chatwin
- Miranda Otto
- Tim Robbins
- Rick Gonzalez
- Lenny Venito

DIRECTOR
- Steven Spielberg

CERTIFICATE
- 12

PRICE
- £24.99

RELEASE
- Out Now

PSM VERDICT

MOVIE	GOOD+BAD	DVD
+ Superb effects that'll keep you rooted. – Awful finale that'll keep you vomiting.	+ Great musical score – hugely atmospheric. – Overwrought work by Tim Robbins	+ Superb on-set documentary. – Seen-it-before F/X Making Ofs.

EXTRAS

Spielberg once more denies us a blab track, but there's plenty of material to make up for it, from a look at the various adaptations of the book to exhaustive effects featurettes.

IT'S BETTER THAN...
SIGNS

IT'S WORSE THAN...
CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF

A terrific blockbuster movie that's as stuffed with spectacular effects as you'd expect. The schmaltz lets it down, but it's still highly recommended.

88

"WELL, THERE'S FOUR OF THEM. SO AT LEAST THEY'RE HALF RIGHT"

FANTASTIC FOUR

Marvel's squabbling superheroes hit the big screen, but don't live up to their name.

STARRING
- Ioan Gruffudd
- Jessica Alba
- Chris Evans
- Michael Chiklis
- Julian McMahon
- Hamish Linklater
- Kerry Washington
- Stan Lee

DIRECTOR
- Tim Story

CERTIFICATE
- PG

PRICE
- £24.99

RELEASE
- Out Now

X-Men. Spider-Man. Blade. Marvel comics characters have produced some incredibly popular and successful movies. And then there's the likes of Daredevil, The Punisher and Elektra, which weren't so well-received... Fortunately for The Fantastic Four, they managed to skirt closer to the successes than the failures, at least in box office terms.

That said, the film itself is a little lacklustre, since the cast hardly set the world alight. As a group of scientists and astronauts who are exposed to interstellar radiation, Ioan Gruffudd, Jessica Alba, Michael Chiklis and Chris Evans struggle with some dodgy writing. Gruffudd has to deal with a dull-as-ditchwater lead role, while Alba has the looks but hardly manages to convince us she's a genetics expert. Evans and Chiklis, meanwhile, have better luck with meatier, funnier roles, but they just end up overshadowing everything else.

DR DOOMED

Choosing to turn the film into a superhero sitcom/adventure, the producers de-fang a lot of the drama, meaning we're stuck with a lot of family squabbling instead of heroics. And when Julian McMahon's villainous Dr Doom turns up, we just can't take him seriously. In the comic, he's one of the most effective bad guys in history, a man with his own country and pesky diplomatic immunity – in the film, he's a scheming, Bill Gates-alike businessman. Some good ideas can't save this from failing to make the grade, quality-wise...

PSM VERDICT

MOVIE	GOOD+BAD	DVD
+ Some witty banter spices up affairs. – Dodgy effects can sometimes detract.	+ Chiklis and Evans steal the film. – Stodgy story never quite gels together.	+ Cast commentary is interesting. Loaded with extra bits. – Nothing bad to say.

EXTRAS

The cast are more entertaining on the commentary than they ever are on-screen, and this is weighed down with documentaries on every aspect of the film's creation.

IT'S BETTER THAN...
BLADE TRINITY

IT'S WORSE THAN...
SPIDER-MAN 2

Tries hard but never quite Fantastic. Worth a rental for a rainy Saturday night, maybe, but far from the essential flick it could've been.

68

MR & MRS SMITH

STARRING
- Brad Pitt
- Angelina Jolie

DIRECTOR
- Doug Liman

CERTIFICATE
- 15

PRICE
- £19.99

RELEASE
- Out Now

Mr & Mrs Smith's production was overshadowed by the swirling rumours about Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie's relationship. But how does the finished film hold up? It's fun, but nothing really special – particularly coming from Doug Liman, the man behind The Bourne Identity. There's definitely an appeal watching two of the world's most Beautiful People™ going up against each other as married assassins who realise that their next target is each other, but once you're past the initial high concept, the film ends up as one shoot-out after another. Love the pistol-packing action? You'll be delighted, but while the movie never pretends to be anything else than a high-powered romp, it soon becomes repetitive. Still, Angelina looks as good as ever, so it's worth a rental purely for that.

60

THE 40 YEAR OLD VIRGIN

STARRING
- Steve Carrell
- Catherine Keener

DIRECTOR
- Judd Apatow

CERTIFICATE
- 15

PRICE
- £19.99

RELEASE
- Out Now

Wedding Crashers got all the attention and plenty of box office, but for our money, this was the funniest comedy of the year. Andy Stitzer (Steve Carell) is a man at peace with his lack of a sex life. But when his friends discover his secret, they make it their mission to get him a girl. Blending utterly gut-busting comedy (Andy's disastrous dates) with an emotional storyline (his seduction of Catherine Keener's single mother character), this Virgin's a winner. Carrell's a comedy genius, able to walk the line between sweet and zany, and the movie never forgets the ensemble cast, who all get decent lines and offer excellent performances. Need a laugh? This is definitely the one to buy. Well worth the money.

82

Films from another space and time

ANIMANIA

BOOGIEPOP PHANTOM

Kids and adults alike fear the legend of the Boogiepop Phantom – meet her on a dark night and you're taken away and *killed*. People tell each other the stories and laugh; no one believes that she exists in this day and age. But she does, clearly, and this horror-themed anime series follows her reign of terror. But the fear doesn't end there – there are far worse monsters on the streets.

78

BUBBLEGUM CRISIS TOKYO 2040

The Apocalypse is coming – and only four women can stop it. You know? The ones in the skintight hose with the impossible hair? Get yourself ready for the ultimate assault on the senses as the wildest action series to ever roll out of Japan is reborn with the state-of-the-art animation and a thunderous rock-and-roll soundtrack. This will blow your ass off.

81

SAMURAI X: REFLECTIONS

Rurouni Kenshin is a wanderer, a lost soul, cursed to seek atonement for his life in the bloody trade of the Samurai. During the long war to overthrow the corrupt government, he was known throughout all Japan as the Master Assassin. But the end of the war has brought no peace to Kenshin, despite a vow to draw his sword only for the protection of those in need. A classic anime series.

89

ALSO RELEASED

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

Out Now Cert PG Price £24.99

Roald Dahl's tale always seemed like perfect Tim Burton material. And so it proves – his take is a crazed delight.

83

DOCTOR WHO: COMPLETE SERIES 1 BOX SET

Out Now Cert 12 Price £69.99

It might be pure geek-central, but Dr Who turned into a huge hit. And it's not hard to see why – top stuff.

85

UNLEASHED

Out Now Cert 18 Price £19.99

Jet Li doesn't often get the chance to act, and now we see why – the melodramatic moments of this action pic are decidedly dodgy. But the action makes up for it.

70

MADAGASCAR

Out Now Cert U Price £24.99

DreamWorks' latest attempt at family comedy is no Shrek. This story of animals set loose from the zoo has some good gags, but fails to be consistently laughworthy.

57

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Dominik Diamond

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Mike Hanna

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Brick Bardo

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'DDH'

"Famously pretentious"
The Guardian

"A huge bunch of fking arse written by arrogant, over-opinionated, under-educated tossers"**
'Clear'

"Sts on most games journalisim [sic]"**
Anonymous

Issue 158 on sale December 22

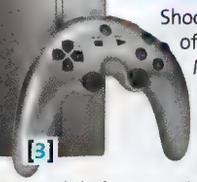
Years aren't like films. They don't set the scene. Follow a plot. Or tie up loose ends. But 2005 made no sense at *all*. We began the year in confusion waiting... and waiting... for PSP, and ended it in agony waiting... and *waiting*... to play PS3. It wasn't really a year about *anything*, with no heart-warming conclusion, clear winner or defining themes. Even as the year draws to a close, we're at the crossroads waiting, hoping and praying for something... we're not even sure what *it* is yet... to happen. But look past the unresolved plot lines, and it was the glorious surprises that defined 2005... from the unexpected brilliance of *God Of War*, to the heartbreaking majesty of *Shadow Of The Colossus* and Snake's baffling, but brilliant, moustache in *MGS4*. Join us, as PSM2 takes a trip down memory lane, and makes some informed predictions for the future...

IS THAT HONESTLY PS3?

We began the year by spoofing the internet with a 'mock up' render of PS3 **[1]** (shaped like a Sony movie projector with some authentic design flourishes), fooling thousands of fan sites and making headline news over the world. While we weren't trying to upset anyone – just test how easily rumours get started on the 'net – the laughs came from Sony themselves, who revealed the *real* PS3 in Los Angeles, E3, at 1am GMT, on Tuesday 17th May **[2]**, (a silver George Foreman grill with a joypad that looked like combo of batarang and discreet double-ended *sex croissant* **[3]**). Seven months on, we're yet to see it actually working – let alone play it – but we live in hope. Which brings us neatly to...

[1]

[2]


[3]

[4]

[5]

[6]

DO ANY PS3 GAMES REALLY EXIST?

Shock of the year was the showreel of PS3 'games' shown at E3, in May including a much-debated trailer for Next-Gen *Killzone* **[4]**. Some folk claimed it was a CGI mock-up running on a high-end super computer, while footage of *Motor Storm*, *Killing Day* and *Devil May Cry 4* looked equally suspicious. The best was yet to come though. *Metal Gear Solid 4* **[5]**, shown for the first time at the Tokyo Game Show in October, controversially cast Snake as a wheezing OAP with a 'tache. The 'in-game' action looked incredible – pin-sharp, with stunning smoke, delicate lighting and oodles of superfluous detail, with Snake battling scores of organic bi-pedal Metal Gears in a fully destructible urban battlefield. It's easy to be cynical, but the *Metal Gear Solid 2* trailer was equally unbelievable back in 2000, but remember, it turned out to be a fair representation of the game.

WHAT ABOUT PS2?

The year kicked off with a reader's revelation that only *two* men in the world play *World Championship Snooker* online, but ended with hundreds upon thousands playing network *PES5* **[6]**, despite the slightly annoying lag times. In truth, it's the only online game we've ever played in the office for actual fun, staying hours after

Best Game.
Biggest Disappointment.
Stupidest quote.
Then PSM2's Review of 2005 takes no prisoners...

work to get called 'Teh SUXXOR' by GANJAMAN0256. Aside from the usual slew of Good-ish sequels (including *FIFA 06*, *Tony Hawk's American Wasteland* and *Burnout Revenge*), there were some AAA turkeys (*Marvel Nemesis*, *Without Warning* and *Fantastic Four*) and some original

[7]

"£35 A TIME FOR FOUR-YEAR-OLD PS2 PORTS? WE EXPECT MORE"

gems (*Gun*, *Fahrenheit*, *Shadow Of The Colossus* [7] and *God of War*).

PSP... PFFFT

We waited nine whole months for PSP [8] to hit the UK, stumped up £179, went 'woooh' the first time we saw a movie on its 'big' LCD screen, then got fleeced £35 a time for a series of four-year-old PS2 ports and cried over the disappointing *PES5* conversion. Bum. Even the best game, the technically impressive *GTA: Liberty City Stories* [9], was – if we're being brutal – nothing more than a re-jigged *GTA3*. We expect more next year. Much more. And if *Loco Roco's* rubbish, we're starting a new life licking pebbles in the Outer Hebrides. Over by Andy's house.

IN THE WORLD OF PSM2

After failing to find the long-rumoured Bigfoot in *GTA: SA*, we captured the even-less-plausible Tsuchinoko [10] in the brilliant *MGS3*. Dep Ed Dan D almost ripped his jumper killing the last boss in *God Of War*, while Staff Writer Nathan vowed to *never* play *Lego Star Wars* again after unlocking every character and posing them in the same spot for 100 screenshots. We tried – and failed – to give away 50 Terry Bogard hats [11] (seriously, just ask for one and we'll send it), Editor Dan G saw the world unveiling of PS3 live at E3 (while everyone else huddled over a PC laptop at 1am to watch a fuzzy 'live' feed), everyone wowed over *MGS4* and Staff Writer Andy finally had a haircut, then spent three hours trying to make it

[8]

[9]

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look messy by rubbing gunk over it like a three-year-old baby. We also got Seabass to admit that PSP *PES5* was a bit rubbish, ate real ants, snakes and (chocolate) locusts with Koj' [12] at the *MGS3* UK launch and wondered who keeps putting those disturbing sex ads at the back of the issue (office fave: '60 secs of my foul <beep>, or 'Text PSM for <Parp!> Alert Service' [13]). Thank you ad department. *Thank you*.

So that's 2005 – the year that made Stanley Kubrick's 2001 look easy to understand. On the bright side, if you consider some of the questions that plagued us at the end of 2004 – when will PSP launch? Will *Resi 4* be a good conversion? Will Sony ever reveal PS3? – and look at the emphatic responses that followed, then here's hoping we'll have as much to cheer at the end of 2006. Playable *MGS4* at E3? Hands-on with PS3 in January (Shhh...)? *Grand Theft Auto: Next Gen*? Keep it PSM2, and we'll face the cruel wind of time together, while defiantly humming the *MGS* theme. Dur, Dur, Du... wooooarghhhh!

CAN YOU MATCH THE QUOTE TO THE REVIEW?

1 "IMAGINE REMAKING THE GODFATHER BUT HAVING STEVE GUTTENBERG PLAY MICHAEL CORLEONE"

2 "TRAP PEOPLE IN A CUSTOM MADE SEX DUNGEON. THEY'RE THEN SUBJECTED TO A RELENTLESS SEX FESTIVALE WITH NO ESCAPE"

3 "WILL PROBABLY HAVE A CONCOURSE OF CLUELESS IDIOTS EAGER TO SUCKLE THE SWEET MILK OF NOSTALGIA FROM ITS TEAT"

4 "IT'S GOT FEWER MOVES THAN AN AMPUTEE'S DISCO"

5 "THE CHARACTERS ARE JUDDERING, SLOT-MOUTHED TROLLS, AND THE CARS LOOK LIKE SOMETHING A STUPID CHILD WOULD MAKE WITH CARDBOARD"

ANSWERS: 1 RACHEL RILEY / 2 PARKOUR / 3 VANISHING / 4 VANISHING / 5 SIGNATURE COLOUR

WE WERE RIGHT!

✓ "Extra mileage may be gleaned by using an old (or future) New York alongside the modern interpretation. Imagine a Pulp Fiction style plot that leaps around a timeline." *Driver 4*, PSM2#64 (July), p19

✓ "John Terry is rumoured to be sharing *PES* promo duties with Thierry Henry" *PES5*, PSM2#64 (July), p24

✓ "The most exciting news is that you might be able to build a custom MP3 soundtrack radio station using the PSP's memory stick capacity" *GTA: LCS*, PSM2#64, p34

WE WERE WRONG!

✗ "Sadly, multi-player options look unlikely..." *GTA: LCS*, PSM2#64

✗ "We found the experience strangely empty after our fond memories of Ico's tightly-plotted puzzles" *Shadow Of The Colossus*, PSM2#64, p19

✗ "We think that the design of the 'new' PS3 pad will change very little" PSM2#61 p28

THE PSM2 TIMELINE OF THE YEAR

Twelve months. Thirteen magazines. Whose brilliant idea was that, eh? Particularly since we're heading into Christmas and it'd be nice to actually stop working 16 hour days back-to-back while playing *Ninjabread Man* and correcting Andy's spelling mistakes, but... hey, that's missing the point. If you've been away, or lost all your mags after an incident with mother – or just binned them in outrage at Andy's *Total Overdose* score – here's what you've 'missed'. Hey, why all the 'inverted commas'? Some of it was actually good...

ISSUE 57
JANUARY
MGS3 scores 97% – one of our highest scoring games ever. Prod Ed Dave joins the mag and reviews – portentously – *Crash and Burn*. Ken Kutaragi appears in news wearing a tin hat holding a PS3 bomb. What!? ■

ISSUE 58
FEBRUARY
EA release incredible 'Next-Gen' *Need for Speed* screens – compare them to actual Xbox 360 screens today for the sad truth. PSP launches in Japan. *San Andreas'* secrets are spilled, and *Mercenaries* briefly impresses. ■

ISSUE 59
MARCH
TimeSplitters: Future Perfect scores a (perhaps generous) 90%, failing to win our hearts, despite its technical excellence. *GTA: PSP* confirmed, *FIFA Street* appals and *Lego Star Wars* cheers us up... until *Fight Club* scores 19%. ■

ISSUE 60
APRIL
We reveal *MGS3*'s hidden secrets – including punching men in the plums dressed as Raikov. *Death By Degree's* is Sony's worst game, like, almost *ever*. Oh, and we exclusively revealed *MGS4* on PS3. Yes. We did. Go and check. ■

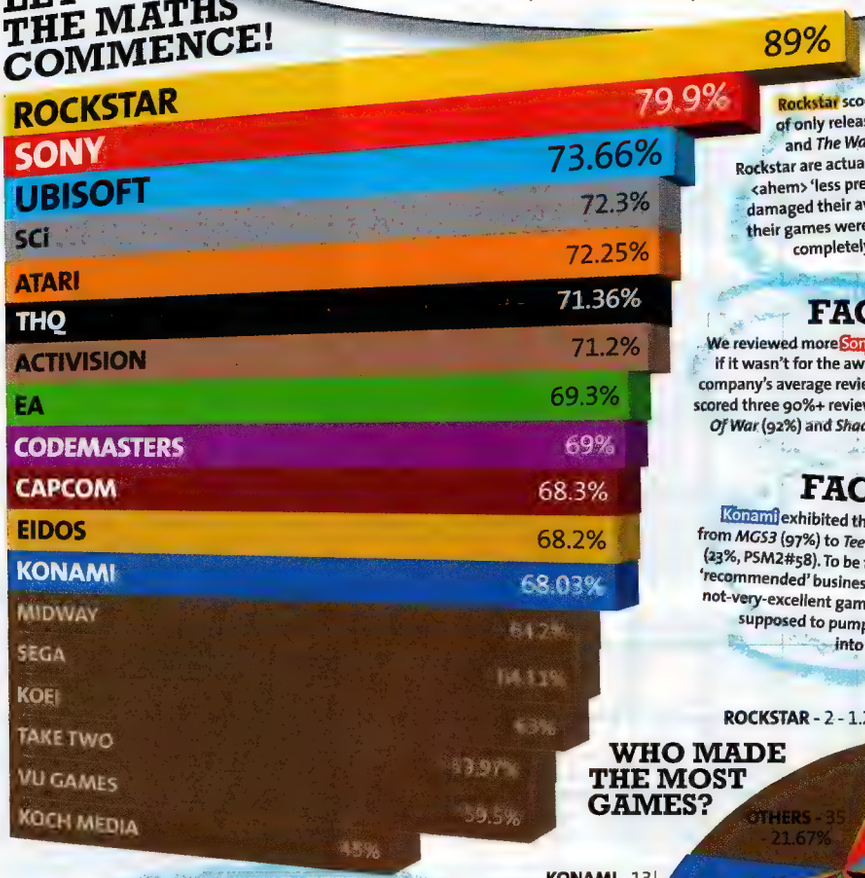
ISSUE 61
MAY
Dep Ed Dan D eats chocolate locusts at *MGS3*'s UK launch party. *PES* league coverage gets serious. Our PS3 'mock up' causes internet turmoil. After a duff tip off, we claim a Sin City game is heading to PS2. Er, soon... ■

ISSUE 62
JUNE
Public go mental for Lara's 'new' look. PSP's 'secret' 333 MHz power unveiled. Dep Art Ed Steph leaves – an actual lady – causing testosterone crisis. *God of War* (92%) saves the day. Raaahhhh! Cough. ■

THE MATHEMATICALLY APPROVED* PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR

"Hello, I'm Texas Instruments' Little Professor, a 20-year-old educational toy who's unlikely to sue for defamation of character. I'm also brilliant at maths, provided you're adding up small numbers and not doing any of that fancy stuff using buttons with ticks and squiggles on. Anyway, my friends at PSM2 have asked me to find the average review score awarded to each publisher over the year and establish who's 2005 best games company. Behold my charts of truth! And remember, kids, buying non-educational toys just doesn't add up. Er... Sorry, I haven't got the keys to do a smiley face."

LET THE MATHS COMMENCE!



FACT BLAST 1!

Rockstar scooped the 'best publisher' award on account of only releasing two PS2 games all year, (*Midnight Club* and *The Warriors*) thus hugely boosting their average. Rockstar are actually owned by Take Two, who release loads of <ahem> 'less premium' products that would have radically damaged their average. The same applies to Atari – some of their games were so bad, or uninteresting, we ignored them completely, thus boosting their average. Clever.

FACT BLAST 2!

We reviewed more Sony games (22) than any other publisher, and if it wasn't for the awful *Death By Degrees* (42%, PSM2#60), the company's average review score would've been over 80%. Sony also scored three 90%+ reviews in *Tekken 5* (a perhaps generous 91%), *God Of War* (92%) and *Shadow Of The Colossus* (a perhaps mean 91%).

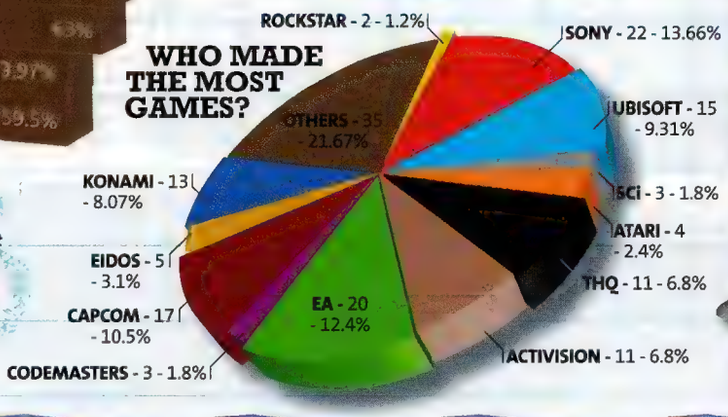
FACT BLAST 3!

Konami exhibited the greatest variance in quality, veering from *MGS3* (97%) to *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2: Battle Nexus* (23%, PSM2#58). To be fair, their varied portfolio is indicative of 'recommended' business tactics, with a balance between cheap, not-very-excellent games, and expensive, AAA+ corkers. You're supposed to pump the money from the crappy ones into the good ones, see?

FACT BLAST 4!

EA only had two 90% games all year (*Timesplitters: Future Perfect* and *Burnout: Revenge*) both of which they 'bought' by acquiring the developers. Sensible stuff. Midway are one of the most consistent publishers (usually scoring 75%+), but let themselves down with the rubbish (but once again cheap and money making) *Arcade Treasures 3*. VU Games are 'technically' the most rubbish (blame Little Professor PR folk!) but all that should change with *50 Cent* this month. Wait... oh, arse.

WHO MADE THE MOST GAMES?


ROCKSTAR - 2 - 1.2%
SONY - 22 - 13.66%
UBISOFT - 15 - 9.31%
SCi - 3 - 1.8%
ATARI - 4 - 2.4%
THQ - 11 - 6.8%
ACTIVISION - 11 - 6.8%
CODEMASTERS - 3 - 1.8%
CAPCOM - 17 - 10.5%
EIDOS - 5 - 3.1%
KONAMI - 13 - 8.07%
OTHERS - 35 - 21.67%
EA - 20 - 12.4%

DID THEY *REALLY* SAY THAT?

1) "I HAVEN'T SEEN A VIDEOGAME WITH SO MUCH DETAIL TO IT BEFORE"
50 Cent (PSM2#64, p33)

2) "I DON'T WANT ARTIFICIAL TREES AND LAND. I WANT TO PLANT A SEED, GROW IT, WATER IT AND WATCH IT BLOOM."
Hideo Kojima wants to build a virtual garden on PS3, PSM2#64

4) "IF PS3 HAD EXISTED IN 1998 IT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE MOST POWERFUL SUPER COMPUTER IN THE WORLD" (BTW: THE MATRIX AND EPISODE 1 WERE MADE IN 1998)
Chris Keegan, Technical Director, Climax, explains the staggering power of PS3.

5) "GTA IS THE ULTIMATE URBAN THUGGERY SIMULATION. BUT I WISH THEY WOULD APPLY THE SAME DESIGN GENIUS TO SOMETHING WE COULD SHOW THAT ENRICHES THE CULTURE INSTEAD OF DEBASES IT. I THINK THAT A LOT OF GAMES LEAD TO A COARSENING OF OUR CULTURE, AND I THINK THAT INEVITABLY LEADS TO GOVERNMENT AND JUDICIAL INTERVENTION. AND THAT MEANS EVENTUAL CULTURAL IRRELEVANCE."
Deus Ex legend Warren Spector despairs for the industry at the Montreal Games Summit

6) "I FEEL ALMOST TO THE POINT OF BEING CRUSHED BY LONELINESS. I SHOULD STOP FOR A NEW LEATHER JACKET, IT WILL PROTECT ME FROM THE LONELINESS CARRIED ON THE WIND".
Much-loved millionaire Hideo Kojima laments his lot, PSM2#69

7) "ODDWORLD STRANGER'S WRATH WASN'T ADVERTISED OR MARKETED BECAUSE ELECTRONIC ARTS COULDN'T GET ITS PS2 PORT OF OUR XBOX GAME TO RUN AND IF EA ISN'T ON ALL PLATFORMS, IT WON'T PROMOTE THE GAME. IT WAS VERY DISHEARTENING... THE LARGEST PUBLISHER IN THE INDUSTRY HAD NO INTEREST IN MARKETING IT, REGARDLESS OF HOW INNOVATIVE IT WAS."
Oddworld creator Lorne Lanning fires a parting broadside before leaving the industry to make films.

8) "I'M TIRED OF URBAN CRIME, ALIEN INVASION, WAR STORIES AND ORC-KILLING. I'M TIRED OF ALMOST EVERY GAME BEING THE EQUIVALENT OF A SUMMER BLOCKBUSTER MOVIE. WHERE'S OUR LOST? OUR CSI? OUR LAW & ORDER? OUR WEST WING? OUR SEINFELD?"
Warren Spector clarifies his criticism of *Grand Theft Auto*.

9) "IT'S GOING TO BE THE BIGGEST GAME PEOPLE WILL SEE IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS. THEN SOMEONE ELSE WILL COPY EVERYTHING WE'VE DONE AND SAY, 'THIS IS THE ANSWER TO *BULLETPROOF*™'".
50 Cent clarifies his knowledge of videogames, PSM2#64, p33.

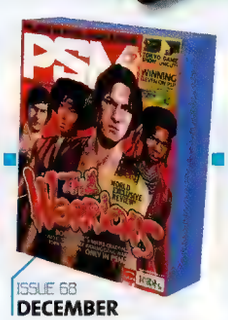
ISSUE 63
JULY
PS3 revealed at E3. *Killzone* dazzles and deceives in equal measure. PS3 sex batarang joypad raises brows. Dan G goes to Playboy mansion. *Again*. 'And?', he sighs, to annoyance of the team. *7 Sins* amuses... ■

ISSUE 64
AUGUST
We cover on least morally acceptable game of the year. We, er, thought it might turn out to be a platformer. Dan D completes *God Of War's* Challenges of the Gods – the hardest mini-games *ever*. With massive help, natch. ■

ISSUE 65
SEPTEMBER
World-exclusive first-play of *PES5*. Psychonauts proves shock winner (90%). Mag's sex ads reach new low. Exclusive *Virtua Tennis World Tour* review. We dress *Tekken 5* characters as Michael Jackson and Dante. ■

ISSUE 66
OCTOBER
Capcom render our exclusive cover art from drawing by Art Ed Milf (minus picture of Milf on Leon's body). World first play of *Resi 4* on PS2. PSP hits UK. *Fahrenheit* raises temperature, lowers pun credibility level. ■

ISSUE 67
NOVEMBER
Terrible cover image betrays actually great game. *Burnout Revenge* rocks. *FIFA 06* flops. Sex ads reach new low. Pat Sharp appears in *Spytoy*. Andy *finally* washes shoes. Australia declares a national holiday. ■



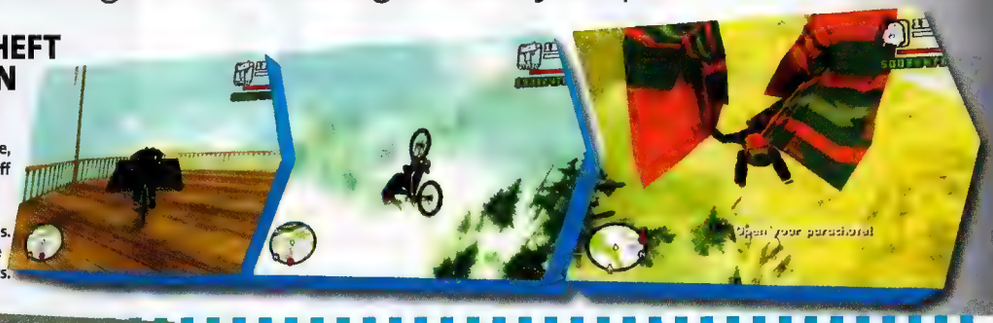
ISSUE 68
DECEMBER
World first *The Warriors* review. 'It's quite good' non-shock. *MGS4* dazzles TGS. Snake's tache' splits opinion. *Buzz* rules. *Resi 4* scores 97%. *Loco Roco* makes us smile. Sex ads reach new low. Andy runs up 'unusual' phone bill. ■

ISSUE 69
CHRISTMAS
World exclusive *NFS: Most Wanted* review. Reader draws *DMC*'s Dante in naked sex fantasy. We play *PES5* online – and like it. Koj's blog drives us to despair. UK *PES* champs fail to conquer Europe. ■

MOMENT OF THE YEAR!

The stand out moments of 2005, from the absurd to the incredible – and the fleeting glimpses of genius that make games truly unique.

1 GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS



Flying the Jet Pack comes close, but nothing beats pedalling off the top of Mt Chilliad and parachuting to the floor through the whispering clouds. Dramatic *and* serene – it's one of PS2's all time best moments.

2 SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS

How do I get its attention? Where is it going? Ohmigod, itsgettingcloser... yaaargggh! Holding on for dear life to the staggering fifth colossus as the wind rips the screen is a landmark moment in PS2 atmospherics. Stunning.

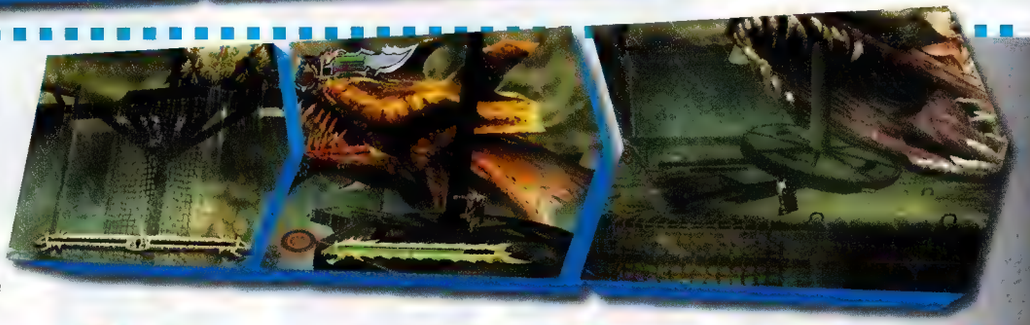
3 RESIDENT EVIL 4

Only Salazar – an egocentric man baby – would be mad enough to make a 60ft statue of himself, and only *Resi 4* bold enough to make it an actual in-game scene. Run Leon! *Run*!

4 METAL GEAR SOLID 3

Just when you think the pace is letting off, *MGS3* hits you with a twenty minute rollercoaster escape from a nuclear war machine as you battle back with infinite rockets. It looks impossibly filmic – Koj, we salute you like The Boss.

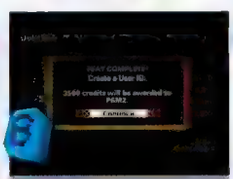
5 GOD OF WAR



Some games wait ten hours to hit you with a full-screen three-stage ultimate boss. *God Of War* waits *ten minutes*. It's like waking up and showering with chilli sauce. Unbelievably, the scale increases later on.

FAHRENHEIT
There's a body on the toilet floor. There's a cop on his way for a piss. What the Hell are you going to do? Hide the corpse? Leg it? What? A memorable opening scene.

THE PUNISHER
In which the Punisher breaks into a funeral parlour, hides in the coffin, and then leaps out in the middle of the service and mows everyone down. Barkingly brilliant.



NFL STREET 2
"Welcome to *NFL Street 2!* Please enter your name!" Tippety-tap. Enter. "Congratulations! Feat complete! 3,500 Credits!" Truly, these are the end days.

LUMINES
So insanely absorbing is this puzzle gem from *Rez* creator Tetsuya Mizuguchi that even hours after playing you still see tiny blocks falling and sparkling in your mind.

7 SINS
The moment we first had trapdoor sex with a tranny had the team crowded around the telly. Not because we're 'curious', but because it was *unbelievable*.

DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE YEAR

10) NOBODY BOUGHT *GOD OF WAR*

OK, so it entered the charts at Number Five and bumbled around, but this was during *summer* – when a game only needs to sell a few thousand to make an impact. Worse, it was outsold by THQ's pleb-embracingly average urban racer *Juiced*. We know the commercial reasons, but, come on...

9) PES5 ON PSP

Our blind faith in Konami left us – unrealistically – expecting a perfect PS2 conversion and six-hour Master League sessions on the bus. What we got was a *good* conversion, with a claustrophobic camera, multiplayer slowdown, muted sound effects and *no* Master League. Boo. Yes, it's still a good game, but...

8) THE REBIRTH OF 2D SCRAPPERS

Urban Reign, Beat Down: Fists Of Vengeance and *Crime Life* were supposed to herald a new dawn for 2D beat-em-ups, but left us aching for the days of the now laughably shit *Final Fight*. *The Warriors* was good, but only as a patchwork blanket of old ideas. We want a *proper* bar-destroying gang war beat-em-up with scripted set-pieces like *Def Jam*. Now.

7) SSX ON TOUR

The menus looked nice, but the fractured structure, constant loading (Do we want to Save? For the billionth time, NO!), uninspired track design and anonymous sound track left us gasping for the hidden short cuts and sheer hyperbole of *SSX Tricky*.

6) CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER ON PSP

In a penalty shoot out, the opposing keeper was an 85-year-old man who shared the same name as us. This is wrong.

5) THE PRICE OF PSP GAMES

£34.99. Think about that for a second. You can pick up a second hand copy of *Project BG&E*, *SSX3* or *Onimusha 3* for a fiver. Now think about it again.

4) SEQUELS, SEQUELS, SE... OH, ARSE.

TimeSplitters: Future Perfect, *Brothers In Arms: Earned In Blood*, *Tony Hawk's American Wasteland*, *Burnout Revenge*, *Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory*... all decent games, but when a sequel's too embarrassed to put a number in the title, you know you've got problems. Could we at least see *something* we've not sort-of played four years ago, please?

3) WITHOUT WARNING

Circle Studios were born when its key members fled Core Design after the diabolical *Tomb Raider: Angel Of Darkness*. Did they learn their lesson? Playing is disbelieving...

2) NO PLAYABLE PS3

We can just about forgive it at E3, where 'possibly-made-up' videos like *Motor Storm* sufficed, but the lack of playable PS3 at TGS looked fishy. Xbox 360 is in the shops now, PS3 is supposed to launch in Japan in Spring 2006 and Sony are still yet to show games. C'mon, Ken, please...

1) WAITING NINE MONTHS FOR PSP

Nine months. That's a long time to wait for some five-year-old PS2 ports that our American cousins were playing at the start of 2005. Sort it out for PS3, Sony!

GAME OF THE YEAR!

Did Total *Overdose* deserve 90%? Are we still playing *Buzz*? Here's our top 10 games of 2005 – plus what we *really* think of them now.

10 FAHRENHEIT

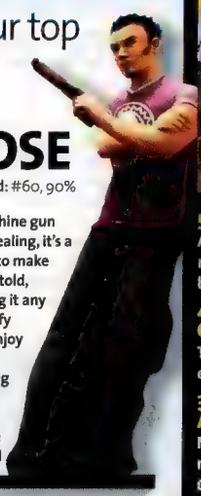
■ Developer: Quantic ■ Publisher: Atari ■ Reviewed: Issue 66, 87%

WHAT WE SAID THEN: "Gaming gold. Don't let anything stop you from experiencing the freshest gaming proposition in months."
WHAT WE SAY NOW: It's probably a little too driven by Bemani mini-games – every action sequence involves one – and the stealth bits are crap, but it's a masterpiece in storytelling, with a plot that extends beyond the usual 'you good/him bad' blandness. There's horror, disbelief and poignancy, and it's the most cinematic experience on PS2.
BEST BIT: Frantically trying to clean up a murder scene before the cops burst in? Beating up an army of police, before hitching a ride on a chopper and leaping onto the roof of a train? Or the most unlikely romance in PS2 history? He's a *zombie*, woman! Stop it at once! ■

9 TOTAL OVERDOSE

■ Developer: Eidos ■ Publisher: Deadline ■ Reviewed: #60, 90%

WHAT WE SAID THEN: "It's not clever, it steals shamelessly from other games and it's more cliché ridden than a James Blunt LP, but it makes us smile – and what's more important than that?"
WHAT WE SAY NOW: Being brutal, it's a shameless rip off of *Max Payne*'s explosive acrobatics, *San Andreas*' free roaming brutality, *Tony Hawk*'s combo system and Robert Rodriguez' movie Desperado, but the magic is its self-deprecation. From the cheesy Mexican soundtrack, to the absurd slow motion cartwheels, machine gun cases and hat stealing, it's a game designed to make you smile. Truth told, we're not playing it any more, but we defy anyone not to enjoy *Total Overdose*.
BEST BIT: Crossing the Mexican Border – it's you versus the entire Mexican army. ■



8 BUZZ

■ Developer: Relentless ■ Publisher: Sony ■ Reviewed: Issue 68, 84%

WHAT WE SAID THEN: "A brilliant idea, brilliantly executed. Loads of questions and a truly inspired peripheral."
WHAT WE SAY NOW: OK, we're not really playing *Buzz* any more – but when it first came into the office, we basically didn't stop, despite the fact the host is played by Jason Donovan. As a four-player game, nothing beats *Buzz*, and though you might not play it for all that long, it's all about the experience of the event, not how long it lasts. At least, that's what Andy tells his girlfriends.
BEST BIT: When the winner is to be decided by the very last question of the game. You've never known intensity like it, you really haven't. ■

7 BURNOUT REVENGE

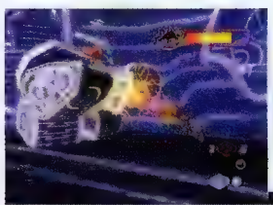
■ Developer: Criterion ■ Publisher: EA ■ Reviewed: Issue 67, 93%

WHAT WE SAID THEN: "Quite possibly the ultimate videogame."
WHAT WE SAY NOW: Perhaps we got a bit overexcited when we said that but there isn't a faster, more intense, more arcade-like, driving game out there.
BEST BIT: Taking out three rival cars, screaming round the final bend and sprinting over the finish line in first place. ■

6 PSYCHONAUTS

■ Developer: Double Fine ■ Publisher: THQ ■ Reviewed: Issue 65, 90%

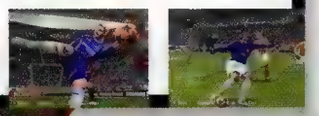
WHAT WE SAID THEN: "A tale of fear, love, anger, joy, heartbreak and sadness. There's nothing else like it on PS2 and you owe it to your soul to buy it."
WHAT WE SAY NOW: We still love it. Lava lands? Pah. Ice worlds? Nope. *Psychonauts* treats you to such inventive levels as a theatre in which the structure changes according to the play on stage at the time and a board game based on *the battle of Waterloo*. It's got more imagination than any other PS2 platform game.
BEST BIT: Watching 'The Milkman' hurl cow juice Molotov cocktails about after you rescue him from the evil Girl Guide leader. Seriously. ■



5 PES5

■ Developer: Konami ■ Publisher: Konami ■ Review: Issue 68, 93%

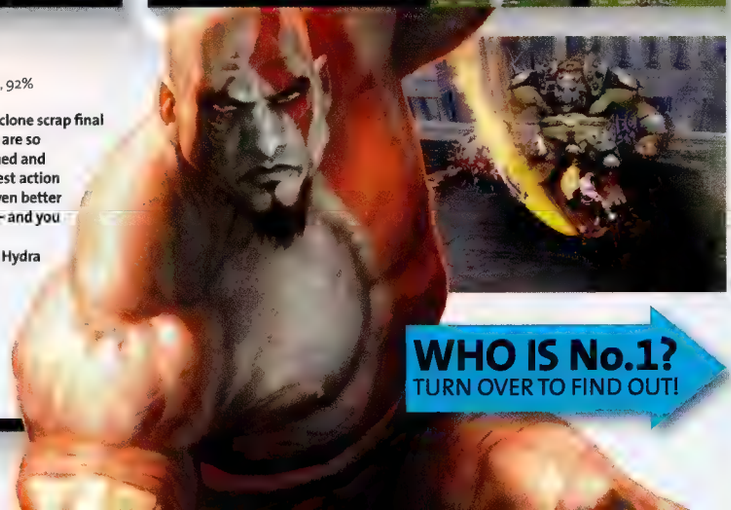
WHAT WE SAID THEN: "Eminently playable, ridiculously detailed, horribly addictive and better than the real thing"
WHAT WE SAY NOW: So authentic, our praise is more cliché ridden than real life punditry. Yes, we play it every day. Yes, we've stayed up until 3am on a school night teaching South Korean development players to take corners. And – like we say every year – it's impossible to go back to the previous version. We've recently got involved with online co-op play and despite the sporadically irritating lag, plus folk called Spliftron-X telling us to 'Suck UR Mum's babylons, BE'EACH', it's compelling stuff. Yes, indeed, *PES* is DA RULE! *FIFA* IS TEH SUXXOR! LOL!
BEST BIT: Scoring a goal. Any goal. Because the game always makes you work for it, and there's even *poetry* in every 0-0 draw. ■



4 GOD OF WAR

■ Developer: Sony ■ Publisher: Sony ■ Reviewed: Issue 62, 92%

WHAT WE SAID THEN: "Brutally satisfying, with exquisite graphics and intoxicating atmosphere – it's the best action game on PS2 and honed tighter than the torso of Adonis."
WHAT WE SAY NOW: We've not played it since we finished it – except to conquer the absurdly masochistic Challenges of the Gods mode, leaving six team members shouting at the screen and barking "Give me the pad... next go, definitely..." in alpha-male disbelief – but the experience burns bright. From the staggering opening battle with the Hydra, to ogling a 50oft Ares and *that* cosmic clone scrap final battle bit, few games are so beautiful, well designed and compelling. It's the best action game on PS2 – yes, even better than *Devil May Cry 3* – and you *must* play it. Fact.
BEST BIT: We said the Hydra over the page, but gripping onto your family as the world tears to pieces is heart wrenchingly powerful. Truly awesome stuff. ■



WHO IS No.1?
TURN OVER TO FIND OUT!

TOP FIVES

WEAPONS

NOT TO BE ARTEMIS SED: Make sure you check out the excellent *God of War*...

5) *GUN*'S SHOTGUN
After ten hours messing about with revolvers, arrows and knives, this explosive beauty is like picking up *Doom*'s BFG.

4) *GOD OF WAR*'S BLADES OF ARTEMIS
The impact of meteor twinned to the cutting edge of a lemon-dipped Mach III.

3) *HAUNTING GROUND*'S AROMATHERAPY CRYSTAL
No joke. The only way you can stop mental man baby Debilitas in Capcom's *Haunting Ground* is to throw smelling salts at him.

2) *WORMS 4*'S SCOUSE BOMB
Bombs? Nah. A worm in a curly perm wig who goes "Ay, ay, ay" and explodes. Genius.

1) *RESI 4*'S FULLY POWERED-UP REVOLVER.
Remember the bit in Batman where the Joker uses a three-foot long pistol to disable the Batplane? Now imagine using that to decapitate a looming villager...

RUBBISH ANIMATIONS

5) REED RICHARD'S BLOCK ATTACK
What are they? Kenny Everett hands?

4) NEO'S 360° POLE SPIN
Path of Neo might be a glorious mess, but watching Neo flatten ten agents in a single 360° swoop is messily glorious.

3) KRATOS' AIR SLAM
When *God of War*'s main man leaps into the air, and slams his opponent into the ground, the squealing noise is *you*.

2) LEON'S HEADLESS DEATH
I'll just deal with this chainsaw bloke and... er... why am I looking at my ankles? What's this light in the distance? Why is it so hot?

1) ARGO THE HORSE
Shadow Of The Colossus's horse neighs, whinnies and leaps like a real nag, with none of that rubbish grooming or plop scooping.

SOUNDTRACKS

5) TOTAL OVERDOSE
Mexican hip-hop? Believe.

4) PES5'S ONLINE LOBBY MUSIC
It's almost like they *knew* getting online would be a nightmare.

3) METAL GEAR SOLID 3
The main 'Oh, what a thrill...' Snake Eater theme is genius, but the classic 'Dur, dur, dur!" strings are the clincher.

2) WE LOVE KATAMARI
Like babies playing trumpets in a sweet factory. It's the musical equivalent of the game – a jumble of maniac sounds.

1) SHADOW OF COLOSSUS
When you leap onto the wings of the thirteenth colossus, and the sweeping score changes tempo... it's just too much. Sigh.

KATA-CLYSMIC: The pumping Japanese lounge chord suits the Katamari action perfectly.

GIANT STEPS: This shot says it all – from the huge scale to the flapping tunic.

3 METAL GEAR SOLID 3

■ Developer: Konami ■ Publisher: Konami ■ Reviewed: Issue 57, 97%

WHAT WE SAID THEN: "Profoundly satisfying – the best *Metal Gear* yet."
WHAT WE SAY NOW: Sure, it's fiddly, unforgiving and the jungle bit drags on, but, like Newton's Second Law, the more you push, the more *MGS3* pushes back: from capturing the Tsuchinoko, to discovering the hidden Jack Savage mini-game, to bonkers CODEC chat (like Signit's shit-firing tank dream). Kojima might be a closet depressed mentalist, but the fact he's allowed to do *whatever* he wants – including writing 90 pages of steaming CODEC waffle – makes his games idiosyncratic genius that EA could *never* replicate. We mean it. Never.
BEST BIT: When Snake climbs the ladder for more than *ten minutes* and the theme tune whistles on the wind – how many games are brave enough to use scale, context and *boredom* to force you to reflect? ■

METAL FEAR: The new organic-style Metal Gears will be all over the battlefield.

2 SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS

■ Developer: Sony ■ Publisher: Sony ■ Reviewed: Issue 69, 91%

WHAT WE SAID THEN: "It's the best looking, most awe-inspiring experience on PS2... and deserves to be played by everyone who loves games."
WHAT WE SAY NOW: We'll probably never play it again – but only because we'll never feel the same as the first time we experienced *that* ending. With only two minutes of cut-scenes in the entire game, the 20-minute conclusion is an emotional jolt, resolving every ambiguity, guilty thought and doubt you've toyed with over the grueling, nigh-on mechanistic, yet dazzling, main game. Just to clarify, we *do* think *ICO* is marginally 'better' – despite scoring it 85% three years ago. Basically, we were wrong (Dep Ed Dan D was *forced* into giving it less than he believed), and despite thinking it would be bettered, the more time went on, the more *Ico* stood out as a work of unique beauty. *Colossus* is almost as impactful, but riddled with niggling technical deficiencies, which sort-of prevents us from giving it the, ooh, 95%+ we feel in our hearts. *Colossus* might be staggering, but *Ico* was the first PS2 game to use silence, and open space, to such powerful effect.
BEST BIT: The 13th colossus. You wait... ■

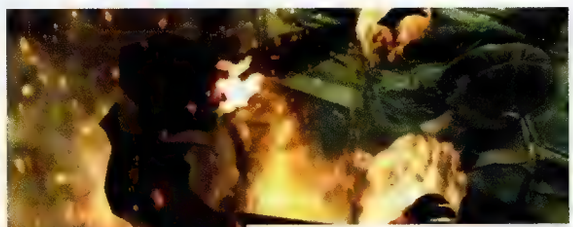
"RESI 4'S SO WELL-PACED, YOU DON'T PLAY IT SO MUCH AS HOLD ON"

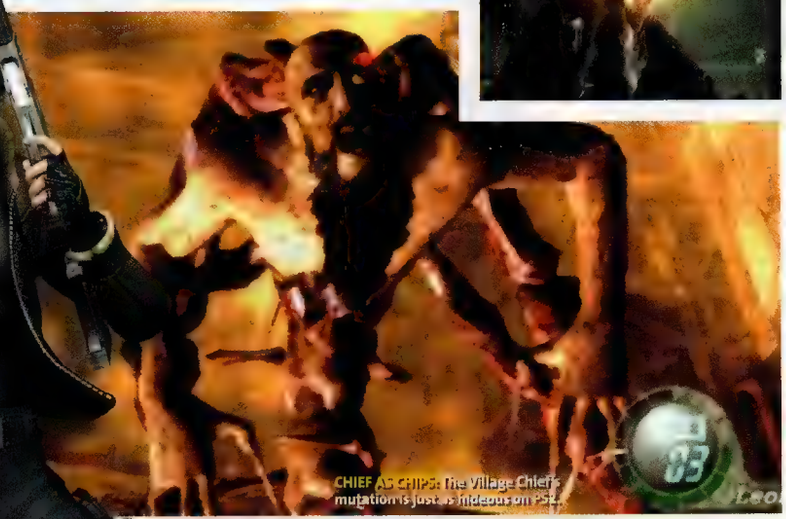
1 RESIDENT EVIL 4

■ Developer: Capcom ■ Publisher: Capcom ■ Reviewed: Issue 68, 97%

WHAT WE SAID THEN: "As close as a game has ever come to being flawless – forget survival horror, this is pure uncompromising action".
WHAT WE SAY NOW: *Resi 4's* brilliance stems from the same principal as *all* great fiction – brutal revision. "Books aren't written – they're rewritten," claims Jurassic Park author Michael Crichton. "It is one of the hardest things to accept, especially after the seventh rewrite hasn't quite done it". *Resi 4* was killed *three* times before it met genius designer's Shinji Mikami's original vision – morphing from a traditional survival-horror puzzler, to an *Eternal Darkness*-style psychological chiller into the pumped-up action game we love today. Even then, it was play-tested for months to eliminate dead seconds, balance weapons and fine-tune the checkpoints. *Resi 4's* so well paced, you don't so much play it, as *hold on* – the relentless set-pieces drag you from the swarming bloodlust of the village, to the daunting scale of the castle and Salazar's grizzly final mutation. It's all about balance and split-second decision-making – do you use your last shotgun shell to shoot a group of villagers from distance and hope to find more ammo? Far better to wait until the last second and head shot the *entire* group earning you a cache of weaponry. It's honestly almost fault-free – marginally less ambitious than *GTA: SA*, but vastly more polished, instinctive and tight. It may not *quite* match the rich lighting of the GameCube version, but with Ada Wong's five-hour Separate Ways mission, PS2 boasts the definitive edition.

"Rewriting is like scrubbing the basement floor with a toothbrush," claims writer Peter Murphy, but in *Resi 4* they've scrubbed a *universe*.
BEST BIT: Loads... but the siege with Luis *rocks*. ■


FLAME ACADEMY: The lighting effects are sensational.


CHIEF AS CHIPS: The Village Chief's mutation is just as hideous on PS2.

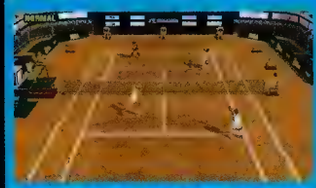
PSM GAME OF THE YEAR

5) PURSUIT FORCE

High-speed arcade gaming perfectly suited to bite-size mobile play, though it pushes PSP a little too hard, and is only original if you forget *Chase HQ*. Very nearly a must-buy. But not quite.

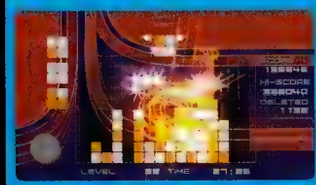
4) BURNOUT LEGENDS

Another blistering arcade 'classic' – it's, er, only a four year old series – and an admirable conversion combining the best tracks from the first three games.



3) VIRTUA TENNIS WORLD TOUR

The best multi-player games on PSP, with classic narrow-but-deep gameplay, stunning animations and some thoroughly diverting minigames.



2) LUMINES

We were a little dismissive of this at first – we honestly though Mizuguchi's previous project, the much-revered PS2 shooter *Rez*, was a case of the 'emperor's new disco' and despite the hypnotic structure made a bloody awful noise – but this stupidly addictive 21st century Tetris left us seeing block patterns in our sleep. Which was funny, until those little blocks started appearing in real-life.

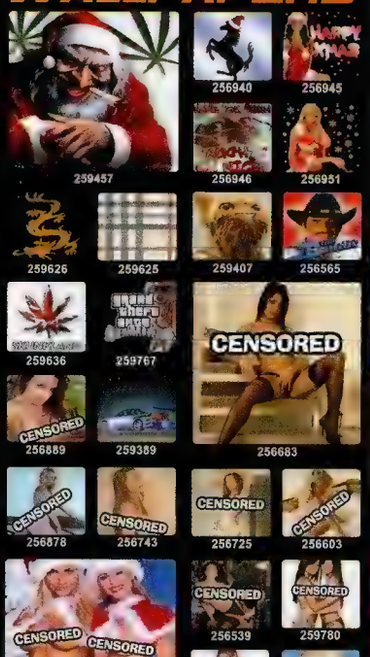
1) GTA: LIBERTY CITY STORIES

A great conversion, and an admirable remix of *GTA3*, the game that defined PS2 and coined the notion of a living, breathing universe. Being objective, it's a bit disappointing after the wilder excesses of *GTA: SA* – there's no flying, gang-banging or swimming – but still a technical marvel. The well-structured multi-player games and custom soundtrack option, complete an utterly essential package.

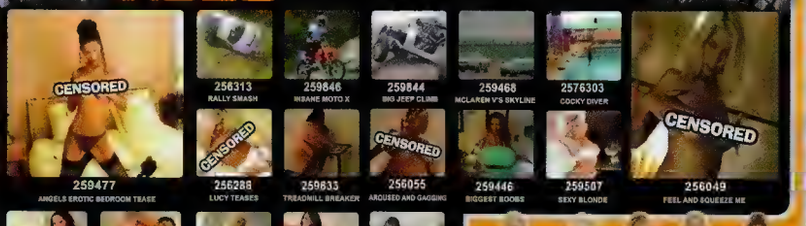
DB Mob

NO CATCH · NO UNWANTED SUBSCRIPTIONS · LIVE HELPLINE · GENUINE SERVICE

WALLPAPERS



VIDEO



2ADULT 2SHOW

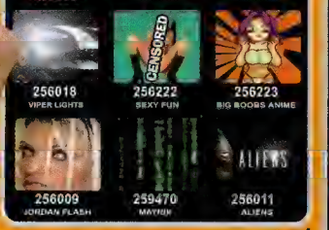
HOT AND HORNY BLONDE RUBBING FUN	259445	256079 - ASIAN BEAVER RUBBING FUN
AWESOME FOURSOME	259447	256093 - LET ME SHOW YOU WHAT I LIKE
		256101 - NAUGHTY BRUNETTE FINGER FUN
		259989 - OUTDOOR ANTICS
		259600 - HIDE THE BLACK BALLS
LEZZIE LICKING FRENZY	259450	259665 - WATCH ME RUB AND TEASE YOU
LESBO RUBBING TRIO	259454	259618 - BLONDE LOVES WHAT SHES GETTING
		259593 - BLONDE GETTING DOWN AND DIRTY
		259594 - SEE ME DO VERY NAUGHTY THINGS
		259951 - SEDUCTIVE BRUNETTE STRIPS
		259984 - LESBO BATHROOM FROLICKS
WATCH ME DO NAUGHTY THINGS	259479	259475 - LICK ME OUT
LEZZIE DIVING FUN	259527	259990 - BIG TOY ANTICS
		256057 - SEXY GIRL STRIPS
		256059 - BRUNETTE STRIPS JUST FOR YOU

FOOTBALL STRIPPERS

256521 - ARSENAL	256530 - IRELAND
256523 - CELTIC	256531 - LIVERPOOL
256524 - CHARLTON	256532 - REAL MADRID
256525 - CHELSEA	256533 - MAN UNITED
256527 - ENGLAND	256529 - GLASGOW RANGERS
256535 - SCOTLAND	256536 - TOTTENHAM

ANIMATION

MUFFIN MAN CARTOON	BJ CARTOON	MUFF DIVING FRENZY
256371	256367	259452
PAMMY BJ	PARIS ROMP	RED HOT STRIPPER
259538	259539	259535



TONES

TRUETONES XMAS CLASSICS

258238	JOHN LENNON - HAPPY CHRISTMAS (WAR IS OVER)
258253	GEORGE STRAIT - ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS...
258235	CHRIS REA - DRIVING HOME FOR CHRISTMAS
258241	BING CROSBY - WINTER WONDERLAND
258247	THE JACKSONS - SANTA CLAUS IS COMING...
258231	BAND AID - DO THEY KNOW ITS CHRISTMAS ?
258233	BIG COUNTRY - WHITE CHRISTMAS
258250	CHIPMUNKS WITH DAVID SEVILLE
258251	ADAM SANDLER - CHANUKAH SONG
258252	ELVIS PRESLEY - BLUE CHRISTMAS

POLY XMAS CLASSICS

252262	HOT FANTZ - SAVE YOU ONE FOR XMAS
252265	SANTA CLAUSE IS COMING TO TOWN
252269	DJ SELECTA - PROPER COMBO
252264	RUDOLF THE RED NOSE REINDEER
252271	COME ALL YE FAITHFUL
252268	WINTER WONDERLAND
252263	LET IT SNOW
252266	SILENT NIGHT
252267	WHITE CHRISTMAS

REAL LATEST

258057	BUZZ LIGHTYEAR - TO INFINITY & BEYOND
258056	DONALD DUCK GETTING A BJ (HILARIOUS)
258051	PULP FICTION - THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS MAN
258047	BO SELECTA MICHAEL JACKSON - SHAAMONE
258011	THE GREATEST FEMALE ORGASM EVER!!
258043	JAMES BOND - THE NAME'S BOND
258061	AUSTIN POWERS - YOU'VE GOT MAIL BABY
258044	AUSTIN POWERS - ALOTA FAGINA
258022	ACE VENTURA - ALRIGHTY THEN
258024	DR EVIL - THROW ME A BONE
258059	SUBMARINE WARNING SIREN
258063	FRIENDS - JOEY - HOW YOU DOIN'?
258079	LION GROWL
258080	MONKEY GOING NUTS
258096	CAR WHEELSPINS

MOAN TONES

258147	TOM KATY
258148	YEAH DROPPING LOADS BABY!
258149	JO PENSIONS GOES
258150	YOU LIKE THAT ASS BABY?
258151	JO GOES
258154	DON'T STOP!!
258156	2 ADULT 2 SHOW
258157	2 ADULT 2 SHOW
258158	2 ADULT 2 SHOW
258160	2 ADULT 2 SHOW
258161	2 ADULT 2 SHOW

GAMES

COMPATIBILITY: A: NOKIA B: MOTOROLA C: SAGEM D: SAMSUNG E: SHARP F: SIEMENS G: SONY ERICSSON

MORE GAMES

CODE - TITLE	COMPATIBILITY
256519 - THE MUMMY	A,B,D,E,G
256806 - 4X4 EXTREME RALLY	A,B,F,G
256810 - BLACK METAL	A,B,E,G
256504 - DESERT STORM	A,B,C,D,E,F,G
256510 - LOTUS CHALLENGE	A,B,C,E
256815 - KAO CHASE	A,B,C,E G
256818 - POOL CHALLENGE	A
256821 - WIRELESS BOXING	A,D,F,G
256514 - SENSIBLE SOCCER	A,B,C,E,G
256805 - SUPER YUM YUM	A C,D,E F,G

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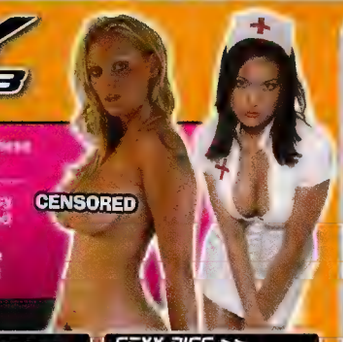

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PSM Presents...

The Truth

Every game PSM2 has ever reviewed in one fact-packed feature. It's the ultimate source of PS2 knowledge at your fingertips.

TOP FIVE

DRIVING

1. BURNOUT REVENGE
2. GRAN TURISMO 4
3. COLIN MCRAE RALLY 04
4. MIDNIGHT CLUB3: DUB EDITION
5. TOCA RACE DRIVER 2

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

1. FINAL FANTASY X
2. DARK CHRONICLES
3. KINGDOM HEARTS
4. FINAL FANTASY X-2
5. DISGAEA: HOUR OF DARKNESS

BEAT-'EM-UPS

1. SOUL CALIBUR 3
2. TEKKEN 5
3. FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2
4. HYPER STREET FIGHTER 2
5. THE WARRIORS

GAME NAME	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
13 (XIII)	42	87%	
187: RIDE OR DIE	66	72%	
2002 FIFA WORLD CUP	22	71%	
7 BLADES	11	72%	
7 SINS	63	58%	
ACE COMBAT 4: SHATTERED SKIES	17	80%	
ACE COMBAT 5	57	79%	
ACTIVISION ANTHOLOGY	36	40%	
AGE OF EMPIRES 2	15	76%	
AGGRESSIVE INLINE	24	83%	
AIRBLADE	16	77%	
ALIAS	47	79%	
ALEX FERGUSON'S PLAYER MANAGER	15	65%	
ALIEN HOMINID	61	74%	
ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2004	35	67%	
ALONE IN THE DARK: THE NEW NIGHTMARE	15	66%	
ALTERED BEAST	61	42%	
ANIMANIACS: THE GREAT EDGAR HUNT	64	62%	
APE ESCAPE 2	30	80%	
AQUA AQUA	04	71%	
ARCTIC THUNDER	16	58%	
ARC: TWILIGHT OF SPIRITS	46	68%	
AREA 51	62	79%	
ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK: BLADE'S REVENGE	11	47%	
ARMY MEN RTS	24	56%	
ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES 2	09	40%	
ASTRO BOY	61	69%	
ATHENS 2004	51	51%	
A-TRAIN 6	49	60%	
ATV OFFROAD FURY 2	40	73%	
ATV OFFROAD FURY 3	68	74%	
ATV QUAD POWER RACING 2	33	68%	
ASTERIX AND OBELIX XXL	46	60%	
AUTO MODELLISTA	28	80%	
BAD BOYS 2	48	51%	
BACKYARD WRESTLING	42	45%	
BACKYARD WRESTLING 2	56	46%	
BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE	17	70%	
BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE 2	04	82%	
BARBARIAN	44	66%	
THE BARD'S TALE	60	74%	
BASS STRIKE	18	64%	
BATMAN BEGINS	65	41%	
BATMAN VS. THE ARMY OF TSU	44	43%	
BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA	31	78%	
BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT	68	82%	
BATTLESTAR GALACTICA	44	59%	
BEAT DOWN: FISTS OF VENGEANCE	67	54%	
BEN HUR: BLOOD OF BRAVES	34	42%	
BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL	42	82%	
BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS 2: TRUCK ME HARDER	65	52%	
BRIAN LARA INTERNATIONAL CRICKET	64	60	
BLACK HAWK DOWN	64	59%	
BLOOD OMEN 2	22	79%	
BLOODRAYNE	36	67%	
BLOODRAYNE 2	63	39%	
BLOODY ROAR 3	11	79%	
BLOOD WILL TELL	57	60%	
BLOWOUT	58	49%	
BMX XXX	30	58%	
BOMBERMAN HARDBALL	65	60%	
BOMBERMAN KART	41	51%	
BOUNCER, THE	11	66%	
BOXING CHAMPIONS	41	40%	
BREATH OF FIRE: DRAGON QUARTER	41	70%	
BRITNEY'S DANCE BEAT	24	58%	
BROTHERS IN ARMS: THE ROAD TO HILL 30	60	82%	
BROTHERS IN ARMS: EARNED IN BLOOD	68	84%	
BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: CHAOS BLEEDS	41	74%	
BURNOUT	15	88%	
BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT	28	91%	
Beautiful, emotional racing that you have to play to fully appreciate.			
BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN	54	93%	
Smooth, fast and online too. You'd be a fool not to buy it.			
BURNOUT REVENGE	67	93%	
As astonishing as ever, and as pure a videogame as you'll ever see.			
BUZZ! THE MUSIC QUIZ	68	84%	
CABELA'S DANGEROUS HUNTS	53	57%	
CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR	56	87%	
CAPCOM FIGHTING JAM	58	53%	
CAPCOM VS SNK 2: MARK OF THE MILLENNIUM 2001	17	83%	
CAPCOM CLASSICS COLLECTION	68	53%	
CART FURY	12	65%	
CASPER: SPIRIT DIMENSIONS	22	48%	
CASTLEWEEN	30	45%	
CATWOMAN	52	30%	
CEL DAMAGE OVERDRIVE	36	50%	
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 5	63	62%	
CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH: REALMS OF EVERQUEST	47	82%	
CHAMPIONS: RETURN TO ARMS	60	69%	
CHAOS LEGION	39	86%	
CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY	66	31%	

GAME NAME	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
CHOROQ	64	25%	
CHOPLIFTER: CRISIS SHIELD	35	48%	
CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	69	67%	
CIRCUS MAXIMUS: CHARIOT WARS	25	55%	
CLOCK TOWER 3	37	59%	
CLUB FOOTBALL	42	61%	
CLUB FOOTBALL 2	55	67%	
COLIN MCRAE RALLY 04	40	92%	
A defining moment for rally games. If you like rallying, get it.			
COLD FEAR	60	83%	
COLD WINTER	62	80%	
COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005	54	88%	
COLOSSEUM: ROAD TO FREEDOM	65	51%	
COMBAT ELITE: WW2 PARATROOPERS	52	77%	
COMMANDOS 2: MEN OF COURAGE	24	79%	
CONFLICT: DESERT STORM	27	78%	
CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2	39	88%	
CONFLICT: VIETNAM	54	76%	
CONFLICT: GLOBAL STORM	67	78%	
CONFLICT ZONE	22	79%	
CONSPIRACY: WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION	65	23%	
CONSTANTINE	60	60%	
CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER	32	52%	
CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX	17	66%	
CRASH 'N BURN	57	46%	
CRASH TWINSANITY	55	49%	
CRAZY TAXI	10	80%	
CRICKET 2005	64	79%	
CRIMSON SEA 2	53	70%	
CRISIS ZONE	53	59%	
CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON	44	35%	
CY GIRLS	50	74%	
DAKAR 2	34	50%	
DANCE UK	42	67%	
DANCING STAGE FUSION	58	67%	
DANCING STAGE MEGAMIX	36	85%	
DARK ANGEL	34	45%	
DARK CHRONICLE	37	90%	
Debatably better than *Final Fantasy X*...			
DARK CLOUD	11	81%	
DARK SUMMIT	21	56%	
DARKWATCH	67	75%	
DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2	14	76%	

GAME NAME	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
DEAD OR ALIVE 2	05	83%	
DEAD TO RIGHTS	38	70%	
DEAD TO RIGHTS 2	65	41%	
DEATH BY DEGREES	60	42%	
DEFENDER	31	76%	
DEF JAM: FIGHT FOR NY	54	86%	
DEF JAM VENDETTA	36	75%	
DESTROY ALL HUMANS	64	83%	
DESTRUCTION DERBY ARENAS	45	42%	
DEUS EX: THE CONSPIRACY	22	88%	
DEVIL MAY CRY	15	90%	
Blindingly gorgeous and cracking to play. A brilliant advert for PS2.			
DEVIL MAY CRY 2	33	72%	
DEVIL MAY CRY 3	60	89%	
DIE HARD VENDETTA	38	54%	
DINO STALKER	26	58%	
DISGAEA: HOUR OF DARKNESS	49	86%	
DISNEY'S EXTREME SKATE ADVENTURE	40	78%	
DJ: DECKS & FX	53	74%	
DONALD DUCK PK	30	64%	
DOWNFORCE	23	64%	
DOT HACK INFECTION: PART ONE	47	58%	
DOWNHILL DOMINATION	46	80%	
DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI	30	60%	
DRAGON BALL Z: TENKAICHI	68	74%	
DRAKENGARD	50	75%	
DRAGON RAGE	23	43%	
DRAKAN: THE ANCIENTS' GATES	20	75%	
DRIV3R	50	90%	
Superb in Free Ride, less so in Story Mode, but balls-out fun			
DRIVEN	17	46%	
DRIVEN TO DESTRUCTION	55	65%	
DRIVING EMOTION TYPE-S	01	57%	
DR MUTO	33	59%	
DROME RACERS	31	50%	
DYNASTY TACTICS 2	44	69%	
DYNASTY WARRIORS 3: XTREME LEGENDS	34	69%	
DYNASTY WARRIORS 4	37	80%	
DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: XTREME LEGENDS	46	70%	
DYNASTY WARRIORS 5	63	53%	
ECCO THE DOLPHIN: DEFENDER OF THE FUTURE	18	52%	
EGGO MANIA	27	40%	
EJAY CLUBWORLD	26	84%	
ENDGAME	25	49%	
ENGLAND INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL	49	62%	
ENTER THE MATRIX	37	81%	
ENTHUSIA PROFESSIONAL RACING	62	77%	
EOE: EVE OF EXTINCTION	22	71%	
EPHEMERAL FANTASIA	12	80%	
ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND	12	82%	
ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD	04	63%	
ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS	20	55%	
ESPN NBA 2NIGHT 2002	24	72%	
ESPN NFL 2K5	59	83%	
ESPN NHL 2K5	59	71%	
ESPN NHL HOCKEY	44	78%	
ESPN X GAMES SKATEBOARDING	15	62%	
ESPN WINTER X GAMES SNOWBOARDING 2	20	69%	
EVERBLUE 2	34	56%	
EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES	41	70%	
EVERYBODY'S GOLF	67	87%	

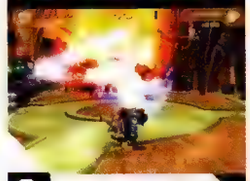
BRONZE AWARD: A very enjoyable and solid game scoring 70-79% | SILVER AWARD: A top-notch PS2 title that scored between 80-89% | GOLD AWARD: A game scoring 90% or more. An absolute classic.

TOP FIVE

EXTREME SPORTS

1. SSX3
2. TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3
3. SSX TRICKY
4. TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND
5. DOWNHILL DOMINATION

PLATFORMERS



1. RATCHET AND CLANK 3
2. JAK 2: RENEGADE
3. PSYCHONAUTS
4. SLY 3
5. BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

ACTION GAMES

1. GTA: SAN ANDREAS
2. RESIDENT EVIL 4
3. GOD OF WAR
4. ONIMUSHA 3
5. DEVIL MAY CRY

ALL-TIME BEST

1. GTA: SAN ANDREAS
2. RESIDENT EVIL 4
3. METAL GEAR SOLID 3
4. PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5
5. TIMESPLITTERS 2

GAME NAME ISSUE	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
EVIL DEAD: A FISTFUL OF BOOMSTICK	37	68%	
EVOLUTION SKATEBOARDING	33	54%	
EVOLUTION SNOWBOARDING	33	43%	
EXTERMINATION	09	78%	
EYE TOY: ANTIGRAV	63	66%	
EYETOY: PLAY 2	56	75%	
EYETOY: PLAY 3	69	70%	
F1 2005	64	83%	
F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP	07	66%	
FAHRENHEIT	66	87%	
FALLOUT: BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL	48	46%	
FANTASTIC 4	65	65%	
FANTAVISION	01	85%	
FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING, THE	30	70%	
FERRARI F355 CHALLENGE	27	67%	
FIFA 2005	54	79%	
FIFA 06	67	71%	
FIFA STREET	60	63%	
FIGHT CLUB	59	19%	
FIGHT NIGHT 2004	48	88%	
FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2	61	89%	
FINAL FANTASY X	23	91%	
The most life-swallowing RPG of them all.			
FINAL FANTASY 10-2	44	83%	
FINAL FANTASY XI (IMPORT)	49	85%	
FINDING NEMO	41	71%	
FIREBLADE	24	68%	
FIREFIGHTER FD18	49	76%	
FLAT OUT	56	77%	
FLIPNIC	45	76%	
FORBIDDEN SIREN	44	80%	
FORD RACING 3	56	34%	
FORGOTTEN REALMS: DEMON STONE	54	74%	
FORMULA ONE 2004	52	65%	
FREAK OUT	13	79%	
FREAKY FLYERS	42	77%	
FREEDOM FIGHTERS	40	92%	
An utterly compelling squad-based shooter.			
FREEKSTYLE	25	59%	
FREESTYLE METAL X	40	74%	
FREQUENCY	23	64%	
FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR	61	85%	
FUR FIGHTERS	10	86%	
FUTURAMA	37	75%	
FUTURE TACTICS	57	64%	
G1 JOCKEY 3	34	43%	
GALERIANS: ASH	34	50%	
GALLOP RACER 2	60	34%	
GAMETRAK: DARK WIND	54	55%	
GAMETRAK: REAL WORLD GOLF	68	74%	
GENJI	66	84%	
GET ON DA MIC	56	49%	
GETAWAY, THE	31	78%	
GETAWAY: BLACK MONDAY, THE	56	71%	
GHOST IN THE SHELL: STAND ALONE COMPLEX	62	47%	
GHOST RECON	30	65%	
GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM	47	75%	
GHOST RECON 2	57	63%	
GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO	17	80%	
GIFT	12	51%	
GITAROO MAN	22	79%	
GLADIUS	42	52%	
GOD OF WAR	62	92%	
God Of War grabs you by the balls and doesn't let go.			
GOBLIN COMMANDER: UNLEASH THE HORDE	47	65%	
GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT	56	58%	
GRADIUS V	51	83%	
GRAND PRIX CHALLENGE	31	85%	
GRAND THEFT AUTO 3	16	92%	
Its scope and and tiny touches are some of the most impressive yet.			
GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY	29	97%	
The music, the styling, the freedom (almost) nothing beats it.			
GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS	56	99%	
Simply the best game on PS2. Mind-boggling.			
GRAND TOUR RACING GT-R 400	51	53%	
GRAN TURISMO 3	13	93%	
The most complete racing game yet.			
GRAN TURISMO 4	59	92%	
Still the most serious racing sim on PS2.			
GRAN TURISMO 4: PROLOGUE	50	79%	
GRAVITY GAMES BIKE: STREET, VERT, DIRT	28	48%	
GREAT ESCAPE, THE	39	73%	
GREGORY HORROR SHOW	42	70%	
GROOVE RIDER	45	52%	
G-SURFERS	16	49%	
GUILTY GEAR X2	35	84%	
GUILTY GEAR ISUKA	65	79%	
GUMBALL 3000	29	73%	
GUN	69	88%	
GUNBIRD: SPECIAL EDITION	62	39%	
GUNDAM: FEDERATION VS ZEON	29	39%	
GUNFIGHTER 2: REVENGE OF JESSE JAMES	35	40%	
GUNGRAVE OD	64	71%	
GUN GRIFFON BLAZE	07	70%	
HALF-LIFE	16	90%	
A port of one of the best PC games ever made. This is a must-buy.			
HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS	31	65%	
HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN	51	76%	
HARRY POTTER: THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE	44	55%	
HAUNTING GROUND	62	78%	
HAUNTED MANSION, THE	46	70%	
HAVEN: CALL OF THE KING	29	81%	
HEADHUNTER	19	81%	
HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION	53	53%	
HERDY GERDY	21	69%	
HEROES OF THE PACIFIC	67	79%	
HIGH HEAT MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL	24	71%	
HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN	28	89%	
HITMAN: CONTRACTS	49	90%	
A game that promotes experimentation and plays brilliantly.			
HOTWHEELS VELOCITY X MAXIMUM JUSTICE	31	51%	
HULK, THE	38	70%	
HUNTER WAYWARD: THE RECKONING	41	30%	
HYPER STREET FIGHTER II: 15TH ANNIVERSARY EDT.	46	89%	
ICO		85%	
INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION	66	88%	
INCREDIBLES, THE	57	72%	
INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB	39	80%	
INDYCAR SERIES 2005	53	63%	
I-NINJA	45	85%	
INTERNATIONAL CUE CLUB	24	56%	
ISLAND EXTREME STUNTS	33	65%	
ISS3	34	78%	
ITALIAN JOB: LA HEIST, THE	40	51%	
JADE COCOON 2	22	70%	
JAK & DAXTER	18	85%	
JAK 2: RENEGADE	40	93%	
Vast, well-built and bursting with distractions.			
JAK 3	56	88%	
JAK X	68	84%	
JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING	46	77%	
JAMES BOND 007: FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE	69	69%	
JAMES BOND 007 IN AGENT UNDER FIRE	17	88%	
JAMES BOND 007 IN... NIGHTFIRE	30	78%	
JET SKI RIDERS	18	38%	
JONNY MOSELEY MAD TRIX	20	38%	
JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VS DEATH	40	83%	
JUICED	62	68%	
JUNGLE BOOK GROOVE PARTY	10	50%	
JURASSIC PARK: OPERATION GENESIS	34	61%	
KATAMARI DAMASHII	49	83%	
KARAOKE STAGE	49	85%	
KENGO	09	60%	
KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER	28	75%	
KESSEN II	20	66%	
KESSEN III	61	82%	
KILL.SWITCH	44	78%	
KILLER7	64	83%	
KILLZONE	55	88%	
KING ARTHUR	57	37%	
KING OF FIGHTERS 2002	64	58%	
KING OF FIGHTERS: MAXIMUM IMPACT	61	79%	
KING OF ROUTE 66	41	44%	
KINGDOM HEARTS	29	88%	
KING KONG	69	72%	
KLONOA 2	10	73%	
KNIGHT RIDER 2	57	21%	
KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001	07	79%	
KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002	21	83%	
KURI KURI MIX	10	78%	
KYA: DARK LINEAGE	45	73%	
LA PUCELLE TACTICS	52	80%	
LA RUSH	67	75%	
LEGEND OF KAY	59	69%	
LEGENDS OF WRESTLING 2	33	68%	
LEGION: LEGEND OF EXCALIBUR	27	70%	
LEGO STAR WARS	62	78%	
LEISURE SUIT LARRY: MAGNA CUM LAUDE	54	80%	
LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS	58	55%	
LE MANS 24 HOURS	12	73%	
LETHAL SKIES	27	63%	
LETHAL SKIES 2	48	68%	
LE TOUR DE FRANCE	23	75%	
LE TOUR DE FRANCE: CENTENARY EDITION	38	71%	
LMA MANAGER 2005	55	80%	
LMA MANAGER 2006	68	85%	
LONDON RACER: WORLD CHALLENGE	40	59%	
LOONY TUNES SPACE RACE	19	65%	
LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING	43	84%	
LORD OF THE RINGS: THE THIRD AGE	55	53%	
LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS	29	76%	
LOTUS CHALLENGE	16	60%	
MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER	38	79%	
MADAGASCAR	65	56%	
MADDEN NFL 2005	54	82%	
MADDEN NFL 2006	69	85%	
MAD MAESTROS	22	70%	
MAFIA	46	71%	
MALICE	51	60%	
MARK OF KRI, THE	33	74%	
MARVEL NEMESIS: RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS	68	41%	
MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2	29	84%	
MASHED: FULLY LOADED	62	70%	
MASTER RALLY	24	55%	
MATRIX: PATH OF NEO	69	81%	
MAXIMO	20	84%	
MAXIMO VS THE ARMY OF ZIN	42	81%	
MAX PAYNE	19	82%	
MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE	45	65%	
MDK2 ARMAGEDDON	09	76%	
MEDAL OF HONOR: EUROPEAN ASSAULT	64	52%	
MEGA MAN X8	59	45%	
MEN IN BLACK 2: ALIEN ESCAPE	26	42%	
MERCENARIES	58	88%	
METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM	41	87%	
METAL GEAR SOLID 2	17	96%	
Near perfectly balanced and worth every bit of the hype.			
METAL GEAR SOLID 3	57	97%	
We didn't think it could get better. We were wrong. A masterpiece.			
METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE	33	78%	
METAL SLUG 3	55	79%	
MIAMI VICE	58	13%	
MICRO MACHINES	30	59%	
MIDNIGHT CLUB 2	37	80%	
MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION	61	91%	
The street racing genre at its peak, *Dub Edition* is sex on wheels.			
MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES	45	48%	
MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES 2	55	71%	
MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES 3	67	12%	
MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING	23	61%	
MINORITY REPORT	31	60%	
MONKEY MANIA	60	69%	
MONSTER HUNTER	62	70%	
MONSTERS, INC	19	41%	
MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE	33	85%	
MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION	54	85%	
MORTAL KOMBAT: SHAOLIN MONKS	67	82%	
MOTO GP3	35	74%	
MOTO GP4	63	78%	
MOTOR MAYHEM	15	63%	
MR GOLF	34	56%	
MR MOSKEETO	22	52%	
MTV MUSIC GENERATOR 2	10	90%	
A musical pandora's box, offering professional results to everyone.			
MTX MOTOTRAX	49	79%	
MUMMY RETURNS, THE	17	46%	
MUSIC 3000	35	81%	
MX 2002	14	78%	
MX RIDER	15	62%	
MX SUPERFLY	27	72%	
MX UNLEASHED	48	75%	
MX VS. ATV: UNLEASHED	61	78%	
MYSTIC HEROES	34	67%	
NANO BREAKER	59	59%	
NARC	62	45%	
NBA 2K3	35	70%	
NBA BALLERS	53	82%	
NBA JAM	42	77%	
NBA LIVE 2004	42	84%	
NBA STREET VOLUME 2	35	85%	
NBA STREET VOLUME 3	60	87%	
NEED FOR SPEED 2	55	87%	
NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED	69	88%	
NEXT GENERATION TENNIS 2003	38	55%	
NFL STREET	46	64%	
NFL STREET 2	61	55%	
NHL HITZ 2003	28	80%	
NHL HITZ: PRO	42	80%	
THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE XMAS: OOGIE'S REVENGE	67	61%	
NIGHTSHADE	46	73%	
NINJA ASSAULT	27	71%	
NINJABREAD MAN	69	32%	
NO ONE LIVES FOREVER	21	71%	
NY RACE	17	40%	
OBSCURE	54	80%	
ONI	07	62%	
ONIMUSHA 2	27	89%	
ONIMUSHA 3	50	92%	
Provocative, exquisite gameplay backed up by plush visuals.			
ONIMUSHA: BLADE WARRIORS	45	75%	
OPERATION WINBACK	08	68%	
OUTLAW GOLF 2	57	78%	
OUTLAW VOLLEYBALL REMIXED	68	50%	
PAC-MAN WORLD 2	33	75%	
PARAPPA THE RAPPER 2	16	75%	
PARIS-DAKAR RALLY	15	60%	
PERFECT ACE PRO TENNIS	38	38%	
PETER PAN: LEGEND OF NEVERLAND	20	50%	
PILOT DOWN: BEHIND ENEMY LINES	65	53%	
PITFALL: THE LOST EXPEDITION	47	71%	
PIRATES: LEGEND OF BLACK KAT	21	38%	
PLAYBOY: THE MANSION	60	51%	
POLICE 24/7	19	49%	
POOL MASTER	05	45%	
POOL PARADISE	48	72%	
POOL SHARK 2	7	56%	
PORTAL RUNNER	16	55%	
PREDATOR: CONCRETE JUNGLE	63	58%	
PREMIER MANAGER	31	80%	
PREMIER MANAGER 2004/2005	57	63%	
PRIDE FC	34	75%	
PRIMAL	33	79%	
PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN	56	87%	
PRISONER OF WAR	24	73%	
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4	55	94%	
Incredible customisation and sublime control Vital.			
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5	68	93%	
The best Pro Evo yet – the most satisfying football game ever.			
PROJECT EDEN	14	86%	
PROJECT: SNOWBLIND	59	83%	
PROJECT ZERO 2: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY	45	82%	
PRO RALLY 2002	22	68%	
PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY	52	86%	

PSYCHONAUTS	65	90%	
Explore the mental landscapes of certified nutters. Superb.			
PTO IV	48	41%	
PUNISHER, THE	60	82%	
PUYO POP FEVER	46	85%	
QUAKE 3 REVOLUTION	08	85%	
RAINBOW SIX 3	47	77%	
RAINBOW SIX 4: LOCKDOWN	67	68%	
RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP	24	56%	
RAPALA PRO FISHING	65	40%	
RATCHET & CLANK	29	91%	
A labour of love on every crafted level. Great stuff.			
RATCHET & CLANK 2	42	85%	
RATCHET & CLANK 3	56	92%	
PS2 platforming perfection. It gets no better than this. A must.			
RATCHET GLADIATOR	69	85%	
RAYMAN	18	48%	
RAYMAN REVOLUTION	05	68%	
RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC	34	80%	
RC REVENGE PRO	04	56%	
READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2	04	82%	
RED CARD	23	80%	
RED DEAD REVOLVER	49	86%	
RED FACTION	11	88%	
RED FACTION 2	29	85%	
RED NINJA: END OF HONOUR	61	73%	
REIGN OF FIRE	30	71%	

BRONZE AWARD: A very enjoyable and solid game scoring 70-79%

SILVER AWARD: A top-notch PS2 title that scored between 80-89%

GOLD AWARD: A game scoring 90% or more. An absolute classic.

The Truth

SCANDALOUS GOSSIP,T. ZERO BULLSHIT

DAVE'S TOP FIVE

HE LOVES BEAUTY, BUT ALSO TEARING BEASTS APART WITH HIS HANDS

1 ICO

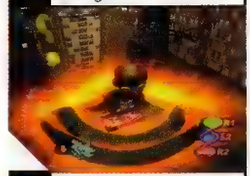
If a game could be described as spiritual, this would be it. Grabs your heart-strings and doesn't let go. Beautiful.

2 PRO EVO 5

Tougher to get to grips with than before, but more rewarding and deep than ever. Plus Michael Owen at Newcastle – hurrah!

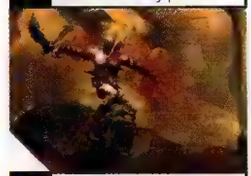
3 RESIDENT EVIL 4

A spot-on conversion from the 'Cube, *Resi 4* shines from Leon's opening moments in the forest through to the end. Wow.



4 PSYCHONAUTS

The *only* truly great platformer on PS2. Colossal in its inventiveness and brilliantly funny, this oozes class from every pixel.



5 GOD OF WAR

Not many games can be defined as 'epic', but this deserves it. Breathtaking in scope, but never lets up on the action. Superb.

GAME NAME	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
RESIDENT EVIL 4	68	97%	
Beautiful, visceral, horrifying and absolutely essential. Get it.			
RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA X	13	80%	
RESIDENT EVIL: DEAD AIM	37	68%	
RESIDENT EVIL SURVIVOR 2 CODE: VERONICA	20	41%	
RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK	45	86%	
RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK FILE 2	67	68%	
RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN OP. RESURRECTION	38	80%	
REZ	18	66%	
RIBBIT KING	55	22%	
RICHARD BURNS RALLY	51	66%	
RIDGE RACER 5	01	72%	
RIDING SPIRITS	27	46%	
RIDING SPIRITS 2	50	48%	
RING OF RED	10	74%	
RISE TO HONOUR	47	71%	
ROBOTECH: BATTLECRY	30	69%	
ROBOT WARS: ARENAS OF DESTRUCTION	16	63%	
ROADKILL	44	72%	
ROCKY	29	84%	
ROCKY LEGENDS	55	66%	
ROLLERCOASTER WORLD	47	50%	
ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGS VIII	48	70%	
R: RACER EVOLUTION	45	37%	
RTX RED ROCK	38	55%	
RUGBY 2004	40	81%	
RUGBY 2005	63	61%	
RUMBLE RACING	10	76%	
RUMBLE ROSES	59	69%	
RUNE: VIKING WARLORD	13	56%	
RYGAR: THE LEGENDARY ADVENTURE	33	78%	
SAMURAI JACK: THE SHADOW OF AKU	51	59%	
SAMURAI WARRIORS	52	80%	
SAMURAI WARRIORS: XTREME LEGENDS	59	66%	
SAMURAI WESTERN	65	79%	
SAVAGE SKIES	34	67%	
S.C.A.R. – SQUADRA CORSE ALFA ROMEO	63	50%	
SCOOBY DOO: MYSTERY MAYHEM	49	51%	
SCRABBLE 2003 EDITION	40	64%	
SECOND SIGHT	53	90%	
Beautiful design and a truly novel take on the stealth genre.			
SECRET WEAPONS OVER NORMANDY	45	76%	
SEEK & DESTROY	39	69%	
SEGA BASS FISHING DUEL	33	55%	
SEGA SUPERSTARS	56	80%	
SERIOUS SAM: NEXT ENCOUNTER	49	74%	
SHADOW HEARTS: COVENANT	60	84%	
SHADOW MAN: 2ECOND COMING	20	68%	
SHADOW OF MEMORIES	06	80%	
SHADOW OF ROME	58	85%	
SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS	69	91%	
Stab big monsters in one of PS2's most astonishing feats.			
SHARK TALE	55	29%	
SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67	51	71%	
SHIN MEGAMI TENSAI: LUCIFER'S CALL	64	85%	
SHINOBI	35	75%	
SHOX	28	61%	
SHREK 2	51	78%	
SHOWDOWN: LEGENDS OF WRESTLING	50	72%	
SILENT HILL 2	15	88%	
SILENT HILL 3	36	87%	
SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM	52	74%	
SILENT SCOPE 3	31	54%	
SILPHEED	03	51%	
SIMPSONS HIT AND RUN	42	77%	
SIMPSONS ROAD RAGE, THE	16	76%	
THE SIMS	31	85%	
THE SIMS 2	69	75%	
THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT	44	79%	
SINGSTAR	49	90%	
For people who don't like games. And for people who love games.			
SINGSTAR POPWORLD	62	70%	
SINGSTAR 80'S	68	81%	
SKY ODYSSEY	08	79%	
SLAM TENNIS	25	77%	
SLY RACCOON	31	80%	
SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES	55	81%	
SLY 3: HONOUR AMONG THIEVES	69	87%	
SMASH CARS	39	54%	
SMASH COURT TENNIS: PRO TOURNAMENT 2	50	85%	
SMUGGLER'S RUN	03	75%	
SMUGGLER'S RUN 2: HOSTILE TERRITORY	17	77%	
SNIPER ELITE	67	80%	
SNK VS CAPCOM: SVC CHAOS	59	78%	
SOCOM: US NAVY SEALS	30	82%	
SOCOM 2: US NAVY SEALS	44	90%	
Immersive and dramatic – worth hooking up to broadband for.			
SOLDIER OF FORTUNE: GOLD EDITION	23	64%	
SONIC HEROES	46	66%	
SOUL CALIBUR 2	40	93%	
The very best fighter money can buy.			
SOUL CALIBUR III	69	89%	
SONIC MEGA COLLECTION PLUS	58	69%	
SONIC GEMS	68	55%	
SOUL REAVER 2	17	78%	
SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR	67	88%	
SPAWN ARMAGEDDON	47	69%	
SPEED KINGS	37	55%	
SPHINX AND THE CURSED MUMMY	46	64%	
SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE	24	70%	
SPIDER-MAN 2	51	92%	
Best movie license ever. Best superhero game ever. Best *GTA* clone.			
SPINDRIVE PING PONG	62	32%	
SPLASHDOWN	16	75%	
SPLASHDOWN 2: RIDERS GONE WILD	40	75%	
SPLINTER CELL	34	91%	
The ultimate 'boys with toys' action adventure that's full of surprises.			
SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY	61	88%	
SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW	51	88%	
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE, THE	59	43%	
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: MOVIN' WITH FRIENDS	58	29%	
SPY FICTION	54	75%	
SPY HUNTER 2	46	67%	
SPYTOY	67	65%	
SPY VS. SPY	61	32%	
SPYRO: ENTER THE DRAGONFLY	30	68%	
SSX ON TOUR	68	83%	
SSX TRICKY	16	95%	
Edgy, funky, cool – compulsive gameplay and pure fun.			
SSX3	41	94%	
Makes you feel good about life. Responsive and thrilling.			
STAR OCEAN 3	55	85%	
STARSKY & HUTCH	38	77%	
STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE	23	75%	
STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT	54	77%	
STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT 2	69	80%	
STAR WARS: BOUNTY HUNTER	31	62%	
STAR WARS: EPISODE III REVENGE OF THE SITH	63	48%	
STAR WARS: JEDI STARFIGHTER	22	80%	
STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER	09	85%	
STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS	33	69%	
STATE OF EMERGENCY	20	75%	
STOLEN	62	38%	
STREET FIGHTER EX3	05	79%	
STREET HOOPS	28	64%	
STREET RACING SYNDICATE	62	62%	
STUNT GP	16	38%	
STUNTMAN	26	74%	
SUFFERING, THE	48	86%	
SUFFERING 2: TIES THAT BIND	67	73%	
SUIKODEN 3	39	66%	
SUIKODEN IV	63	65%	
SUMMER HEAT BEACH VOLLEYBALL	39	56%	
SUMMONER	07	70%	
SUMMONER 2	29	73%	
SUM OF ALL FEARS, THE	29	57%	
SUPER BUST-A-MOVE	04	78%	
SUPERFARM	42	60%	
SUPERMAN: SHADOW OF APOKOLIPS	29	48%	
SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE	66	84%	
SWAT GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM	42	82%	
SWING AWAY GOLF	05	70%	
SX SUPERSTAR	38	53%	
SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN	50	75%	
TAITO LEGENDS	68	45%	
TAK 2: THE STAFF OF DREAMS	64	72%	
TAZ: WANTED	28	70%	
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES	47	56%	
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 2: BATTLE NEXUS	58	23%	
TEKKEN 4	27	90%	
Way more of everything than the stopgap Tournament title. Brilliant.			
TEKKEN 5	61	91%	
And even better again – the ultimate *Tekken*.			
TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT	04	87%	
TENCHU: FATAL SHADOWS	63	68%	
TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN	34	70%	
TERMINATOR: DAWN OF FATE	28	49%	
TERMINATOR 3: REDEMPTION	55	66%	
TEST DRIVE: OFFROAD WIDE OPEN	16	44%	
THEME PARK WORLD	05	68%	
THING, THE	27	83%	
THIS IS FOOTBALL 2004	47	75%	
THIS IS FOOTBALL 2005	56	68%	
THUNDERHAWK: OPERATION PHOENIX	14	70%	
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005	54	82%	
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006	67	78%	
TIME CRISIS 2	16	78%	
TIMESPLITTERS 2	28	95%	
Stunning multi-player PLUS a massive single-player mode.			
TIMESPLITTERS 3: FUTURE PERFECT	59	90%	
Now rather more soulless than before. Still superb, though.			
TOCA RACE DRIVER	26	82%	
TOCA RACE DRIVER 2	54	90%	
Tracks, cars and – vitally – racing are all super.			
TOKYO ROAD RACE	36	45%	
TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS	38	58%	
TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND	68	86%	
TONY HAWKS UNDERGROUND 2	55	89%	
TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4	30	94%	
Lacks the impact of *THPS3*, but we suggest you get this version first.			
TOP GEAR DARE DEVIL	04	62%	
TOP GUN: COMBAT ZONE	16	67%	
TOP SPIN	68	61%	
TOTAL CLUB MANAGER 2005	56	56%	
TOTAL IMMERSION RACING	31	74%	
TOTAL OVERDOSE	67	90%	
GTA in Mexico, basically, but with stacks of class. Terrific.			
TRANSFORMERS	49	84%	
TREASURE PLANET	29	75%	
TRIBES: AERIAL ASSAULT	37	74%	
TRUE CRIME	43	74%	
TUROK EVOLUTION	27	71%	
TT SUPERBIKES	63	41%	
TWISTED METAL: BLACK	13	80%	
TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER 2	55	38%	
U MOVE SUPER SPORTS	57	63%	
UEFA CHALLENGE	12	56%	
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2004-2005	59	62%	
UEFA EURO 2004	49	70%	
UFC: SUDDEN IMPACT	51	70%	
UFC: THROWDOWN	27	75%	
ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN	68	79%	
UNDER THE SKIN	58	70%	
UNLIMITED SAGA	42	41%	
UNREAL TOURNAMENT	07	82%	
URBAN FREESTYLE SOCCER	45	72%	
URBZ – SIMS IN THE CITY, THE	56	50%	
USA RACER	36	37%	
VAMPIRE NIGHTS	21	59%	
VAN HELSING	49	67%	
VEXX	34	73%	
VIB RIPPLE	52	58%	
VICTORIOUS BOXERS	14	80%	
VIETCONG: PURPLE HAZE	54	71%	
VIEWTIFUL JOE	54	88%	
VIEWTIFUL JOE 2	58	85%	
VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION	36	87%	
VIRTUAL-ON: MARZ	39	56%	
VIRTUA TENNIS 2	30	88%	
V-RALLY 3	24	81%	
WACKY RACES	11	63%	
WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED: FT. SHAUN MURRAY	37	65%	
WALLACE AND GROMIT IN PROJECT ZOO	41	69%	
WALLACE AND GROMIT: CURSE O/T WERE-RABBIT	68	72%	
THE WARRIORS	68	87%	
WARHAMMER 40,000: FIRE WARRIOR	40	65%	
WAR OF THE MONSTERS	34	69%	
WAY OF THE SAMURAI	50	80%	
WDL THUNDER TANKS	06	69%	
WE LOVE KATAMARI	69	82%	
WHIPLASH	46	72%	
WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE 2	17	53%	
WILD ARMS 3	33	71%	
WILD WILD RACING	03	71%	
WINNING ELEVEN 9	66	91%	
As close to real football as you'll ever see on your PS2.			
WIPEOUT FUSION	19	73%	
WITHOUT WARNING	68	49%	
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2004	51	80%	
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY	48	55%	
WORLD WAR ZERO: IRONSTORM	48	77%	
WORMS 3D	42	80%	
WORMS4: MAYHEM	64	47%	
WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 4	55	87%	
WORLD SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP 2005	61	68%	
WRC: RALLY EVOLVED	68	89%	
WRECKLESS: THE YAKUZA MISSIONS	30	38%	
WWE SMACKDOWN! VS. RAW	56	85%	
WWE SMACKDOWN! VS. RAW 2006	69	83%	
WWF SMACKDOWN! JUST BRING IT	16	80%	
THE X-FACTOR SING	69	18%	
XGRA: EXTREME G	40	75%	
X-MEN LEGENDS 2: RISE OF APOCALYPSE	68	71%	
X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION	31	67%	
X-MEN: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE	36	75%	
X SQUAD	06	59%	
YETISPORTS ARCTIC ADVENTURES	65	44%	
YU-GI-OH!: DUELLISTS OF THE ROSES	41	62%	
ZOE 2: THE 2ND RUNNER	35	79%	

BRONZE AWARD: A very enjoyable and solid game scoring 70-79%

SILVER AWARD: A top-notch PS2 title that scored between 80-89%

GOLD AWARD: A game scoring 90% or more. An absolute classic.

TOP FIVE

PSP GAMES

1. BURNOUT LEGENDS
2. VIRTUA TENNIS WORLD TOUR
3. GTA LIBERTY CITY STORIES
4. RIDGE RACER
5. MIDNIGHT CLUB 3

FOOTBALL MANAGEMENT

1. LMA MANAGER 2006
2. PES MASTER LEAGUE
3. ALEX FERGUSON'S...
4. PREMIER MANAGER 04/05
5. CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER

INDEPENDENT WOMEN

1. CARLA (FAHRENHEIT)
2. LARA CROFT
3. SOPHITIA (SOUL CALIBUR III)
4. THE NURSE (GREGORY HORROR...)
5. BUFFY (CHAOS BLEEDS)

UNLIKELY BABYSITTERS

1. CRYPTO (DESTROY ALL HUMANS)
2. DEBILITAS (HAUNTING GROUND)
3. THE PUNISHER
4. VENOM (ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN)
5. SALAZAR (RESI 4)

PSP REVIEWS

Every PSP game PSM2 has ever reviewed. Look! Down there!

NEW ENTRY

SSX ON TOUR

Hurtle down improbable slopes on skis and boards. Not quite as good as we'd hoped, mind.

NEW ENTRY

FIFA 06

This is marginally better than *Pro Evo 5* on PSP, y'know. We never thought we'd see the day.

BURNOUT LEGENDS

An essential PSP buy. All the best bits of the *Burnout* series, and more besides.

NEW ENTRY

DEATH JR

Following *Medievil*, another rubbish platformer with a dead star. Disappointing.

APE ACADEMY	66	85%
BURNOUT LEGENDS	**67**	**92%**
Like being smashed in the face in the best way possible. A stunning demonstration of PSP's power.		
COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005	66	84%
CODED ARMS	67	52%
THE CON	69	45%
DARKSTALKER CHRONICLES	66	74%
DEATH JR	69	47%
EVERYBODY'S GOLF	66	81%
F1 GRAND PRIX	66	71%
FIFA 06	69	81%
FIFA 2005	66	68%
FIRED UP	66	54%
GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES	**69**	**90%**
GTAIII Remixed, in essence, but still an absolute stormer of a game. PS2's greatest series, now in portable form. Bliss.		
LORD OF THE RINGS TACTICS	69	80%
LUMINES	66	85%
MEDIEVIL RESURRECTION	66	67%
METAL GEAR ACID	66	57%
MERCURY	67	85%
MIDNIGHT CLUB 3	66	87%
NBA STREET SHOWDOWN	66	80%
NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND RIVALS	66	84%
NFL STREET 2	66	72%
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5	69	80%
PURSUIT FORCE	68	80%
RIDGE RACER	66	88%
SPIDER-MAN 2	66	50%
SMART BOMB	66	36%
SSX ON TOUR	69	79%
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005	66	76%
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006	69	72%
TOCA RACE DRIVER 2	66	79%
TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2 REMIX	66	81%
UNTOLD LEGENDS: BROTHERHOOD OF THE BLADE	66	66%
VIRTUA TENNIS WORLD TOUR	**66**	**91%**
A 'must have' title on PSP. Shows how to combine a sports sim with easy arcade style.		
WINNING ELEVEN 9	68	79%
WIPEOUT PURE	66	84%
WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP	66	80%
WORLD SNOOKER CHALLENGE 2005	67	70%
WORLD TOUR SOCCER	66	80%

NEW ENTRY

LORD OF THE RINGS TACTICS

Like statistics, fighting and beards? Why, this'll be right up your gaming alley.

NEW ENTRY

GTA: LIBERTY CITY STORIES

It's Grand Theft Auto *in the palm of your hand!* Do you need any more recommendation? Just go out and buy this one, right now. It's everything you could hope for.

■ **BRONZE AWARD:** A very enjoyable and solid game scoring 70-79% ■ **SILVER AWARD:** A top-notch PS2 title that scored between 80-89% ■ **GOLD AWARD:** A game scoring 90% or more. An absolute

Mobile Games

Midnight Poker

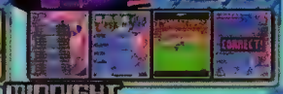
Once you're at the table, there's no room for joking around. Your opponents will use their ultra-realistic artificial intelligence to wipe out your savings in no time, if you let them do it! All the characteristics of a real Texas Hold'em game have been included in this ultra-realistic simulation created by true Poker lovers.

Play 50

Four Four Two Trivia Quiz

FourFourTwo Trivia™ Quiz offers you the chance to test your knowledge in the ultimate football quiz on mobile! Start off with the National Cup. Winning this title will unlock the European Cup, and a victory at the European cup will unlock the International Cup! Are you up for the challenge!

Play 49



War of the Worlds

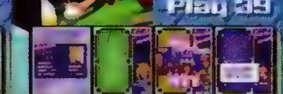
War of the Worlds™ consists of 13 levels of pure shooting action in 5 different environments inspired by the film and its universe. You will marvel at the amazing graphics depicting Osaka, London, and New York as they are overcome by the tripods. In order to maximize your score, you must destroy as much as possible.

Play 47

Midnight Pool

Midnight Pool™ brings you into the competitive universe of a genuine American pool hall. You will face 8 original players, none of whom are ever at a loss for words! Choose from 3 available characters, then unlock the others in Tournament mode, where you can play with the rule set of your preference.

Play 39



Asphalt Urban GT2

Remarkable courses in the streets of 8 famous cities while you're behind the wheel of 8 cars and two special motorcycles: that's Asphalt : Urban GT™2. The goal is simple—keep winning races to uncover new racing circuits and vehicles, customize your hotrod, and make the Pussycat Dolls purr!

Play 53

Splinter Cell Chaos Theory

For the first time in the Splinter Cell™ series for mobile phones, you can use brand new weapons to confront your enemies, like Knives, Drones, Grenades and your enemies even have sniffer dogs to track you down in the dark!

Play 41

Midnight Bowling

Besides the authentic spirit of the game, Midnight Bowling takes you to all of the hottest bowling alleys, from Star Light to Ocean Alley. Each time you'll discover a different but alluring setting. Exceptional gameplay, including the exclusive spin control: even after you've thrown the ball, guide it right towards a strike!

Play 52

New York Nights

"New York Nights" is a new kind of simulation game, with funny and unexpected situations. Thanks to its intuitive gameplay, for the first time on your mobile phone you can live and interact in New York: do bodybuilding, go to a concert, even dance in a nightclub!

Play 40

Brothers in Arms

You are a soldier in a paratrooper squad who must successfully overcome all of the obstacles, from the chaotic beaches, to the African desert where the menacing regiments of the Afrikacorps wait for you with determination. Inspired by historical events, this game gives players thrills worthy of a Hollywood blockbuster.

Play 51

Sexy Poker 2004

Play saucy strip poker wherever you want. Animated using brand new artificial intelligence, your sensual partners take great pleasure in adding a little fantasy to your mobile. But watch out, these girls aren't easy and they all have strong personalities.

Play 10

Medieval Combat

Medieval Combat™ offers perfect gameplay and flowers spectacular attacks: destroy parts of your adversary's armor in order to deliver increasingly deadly blows. The more you hit your opponent, the more you increase your magic gauge, to the point where you can unleash a devastating fury!

Play 49

2005 Real Football

2005 Real Football™ features realistic and extremely detailed animations (dribbling, scissor kicks etc), and captures the ambiance of a real match! These features, combined with graphics based on authentic 3D models, intuitive gameplay and improved artificial intelligence, make 2005 Real Football™ the leader in football games.

Play 43

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eg. to order Asphalt Urban GT text Play 36 to 68111

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Ryu	11
Ken	21
[illegible]	46
Guile	47
[illegible]	104
E-Honda	121
[illegible]	122
Zangief	123
[illegible]	133

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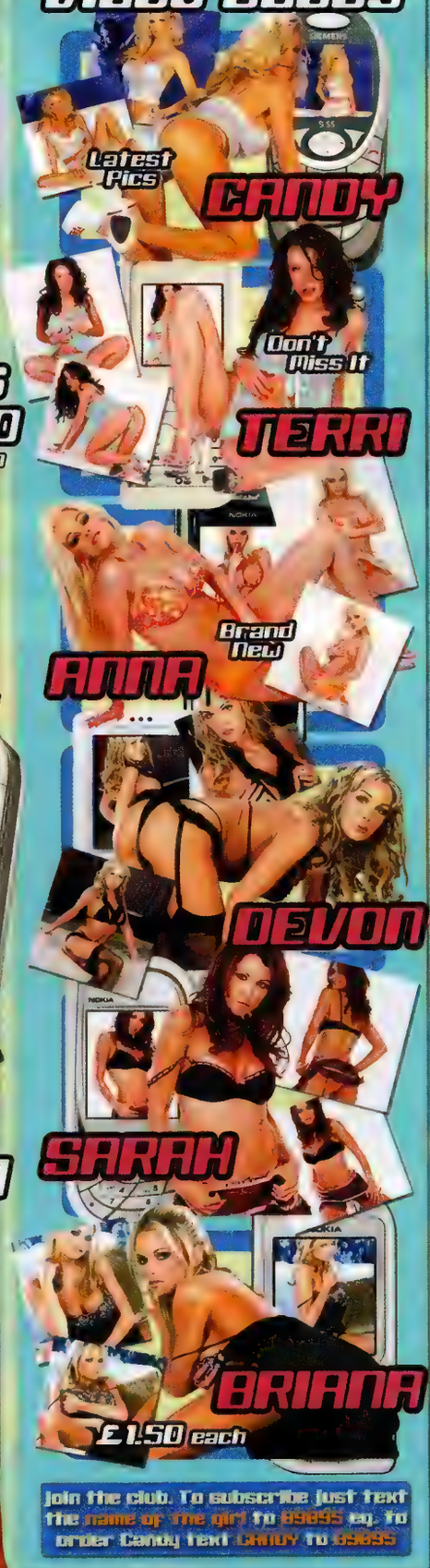

£1.50 each

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The Hentai service is a subscription service costing £4.50/week. Each animation costs £1.50. You receive 3 animations/week. To opt out text hentai stop or stop. The Video Babes service is a subscription service costing £4.50/week. Each video costs £1.50. You receive 3 videos/week. To opt out text back the keyword you used to join followed by stop or stop. The spool videos service is a subscription service costing £4.50 per week. Each animation costs 75p. You receive 1 video/day. To opt out text spoof stop or stop. The Pole dancing service is a subscription service costing £4.50/week. Each dance video costs £1.50. You receive 3 videos/week. To opt out text strip stop or stop. Games provider Gameloft Ltd. All rights reserved. For customer support please email us at customerservices@rmob.com or call us on 08708554194 Mon-Fri

QUICK TIP ATV OFFROAD FURY 3 TO UNLOCK ALL EVENTS, ENTER "IMP@TIENT" AT THE CHEATS MENU

PRO IT

TRAINING YOU IN THE DARK ARTS OF PS2

96 SOUL CALIBUR III

We show you how to do, well, almost everything in PS2's most astonishing beat-'em-up. You'll soon be an unstoppable fighting machine. Maybe.

98 MADDEN NFL 06

In US Football, "the touching of a loose ball in an unsuccessful attempt to gain possession" is termed a "muff". Snigger.

100 GTA LIBERTY CITY STORIES

A "muff" indeed... those Americans, eh? Oh, sorry – yep, we've cracked open EVERYTHING you need to know about *GTA* on PSP. Feast your eyes on this.

Quick and easy tips for the latest games – and the best GTA maps in the universe. Believe.

TIP OF THE MONTH

IS PS2'S GREATEST BEAT-'EM-UP PROVING TO BE OF JUST TOO HIGH A CALIBUR FOR YOUR MEAGRE SKILLS? WE CAN HELP.

SOUL CALIBUR III

MORE COSTUME COLOUR EDITS

At standard character colour edit screen, select a female character. Choose any weapon, then hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 when the screen turns black. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a sound. The colour of the fourth article of clothing can be changed. Note: This doesn't work on all costumes.

JAPANESE VOICE ACTORS

Go to the options menu and select the sound options. Select Japanese for the language option. Then, go to single player modes, museum, or character profiles. Select a character, then choose voice. Press L1, L2, R1, or R2 and a separate bow should be displayed, with name of the Japanese voice-over actor.

CHAOS: SPIRITUAL REALM STAGE

Defeat Night Terror in Tales Of Souls mode or play 775 battles to unlock the Chaos: Spiritual Realm stage.

EGYPTIAN TEMPLE STAGE

Clear the Egyptian Temple stage in Tales Of Souls mode or play 825 battles to unlock the Egyptian Temple stage.

ALTERNATE EGYPTIAN TEMPLE STAGE

Get a "Clear" or higher rank in Sudden Death Rally on the Easy difficulty setting in Soul Arena mode, or play 1,025 battles to unlock the alternate Egyptian Temple stage.

LAKESIDE COLOSSEUM STAGE

Clear the Lakeside Colosseum stage in Tales Of Souls mode or play 475 battles to unlock the Lakeside Colosseum stage.

LAKESIDE COLOSSEUM – NO CAGE STAGE

Clear the Lakeside Colosseum – No Cage stage in Tales Of Souls mode or play 875 battles to unlock the Lakeside Colosseum – No Cage stage.

LOST CATHEDRAL - RUIN STAGE

Clear the Lost Cathedral – Ruin stage in Tales Of Souls mode or play 725 battles to unlock the Lost Cathedral - Ruin stage.

PIRATE RAID STAGE

Clear the Pirate Raid stage in Tales Of Souls mode or play 625 battles to unlock the Pirate Raid stage.

SACRED MT. FUJI STAGE

Clear the Sacred Mt. Fuji stage in Tales Of Souls mode or play 425 battles to unlock the Sacred Mt. Fuji stage.

SILK ROAD RUIN STAGE

Clear the Silk Road Ruin stage in Tales Of Souls mode or play 675 battles to unlock the Silk Road Ruin stage.

PLAY AS ABELIA

Clear Chronicle 18 in Chronicles Of The Sword mode or play 1,050 battles to unlock Abelia.

PLAY AS ABYSS

Unlock Cervantes, Lizardman, Olcadan, Rock, Sophitia, and Yoshimitsu, then successfully complete Tales Of Souls mode to unlock Abyss. Alternately, play 725 battles.

PLAY AS AMY

Get an evaluation of "Clear" or higher in Beloved on the Easy difficulty setting in Soul Arena mode, or play 1,250 battles to unlock Amy.

PLAY AS AURELIA

Clear Chronicle 12 in Chronicles Of The Sword mode or play 900 battles to unlock Aurelia.

PLAY AS CERVANTES

Defeat Cervantes in Tales Of Souls mode or play 625 battles to unlock him.

PLAY AS CHESTER

Clear Chronicle 19 in Chronicles Of The Sword mode or play 950 battles to unlock Chester.

PLAY AS LYNETTE

Defeat Lynette in Tales Of Souls mode or play 1,100 battles to unlock her.

PLAY AS MISER

Defeat Miser in Tales Of Souls mode or play 750 battles to unlock him.

PLAY AS OLCADAN

Defeat Olcadan in Tales Of Souls mode or play 575 battles.

PLAY AS REVENANT

Defeat Revenant in Tales Of Souls mode or play 1,200 battles to unlock him.

PLAY AS ROCK

Defeat Rock in Tales Of Souls mode or play 475 battles to unlock him.

PLAY AS SOPHITIA

Defeat Sophitia in Tales Of Souls mode or play 525 battles to unlock her.

PLAY AS STRIFE

Clear Chronicle 20 in Chronicles Of The Sword mode or play 1,000 battles to unlock Strife.

PLAY AS VALERIA

Defeat Valeria in Tales Of Souls mode or play 700 battles to unlock her.

PLAY AS YOSHIMITSU

Defeat Yoshimitsu in Tales Of Souls mode or play 425 battles.

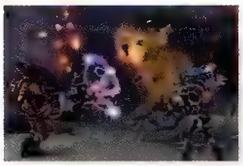
ALTERNATE INTERMISSION SEQUENCE OUTCOMES

During most of the intermission sequences in Tales Of Souls mode, a directional or attack button may appear in the upper right hand corner of the screen. Pressing the button (or buttons) promptly will result in a positive turn of events in the sequence, while failing to press the button(s) results in a negative turn of events. Endings vary the most, with dramatic differences in pressing or not pressing the buttons (some outcomes may be as drastic as your chosen character living or dying).

ANGRY SHOPKEEPER

Go to any shop and highlight anything you cannot afford or something you already have. If you try to buy the item, it will either say you do not have enough gold or that you already have it. However, if you rapidly press either ⊗ or ◎ enough times, the shopkeeper will get mad. Each has a unique move that they will do.

PS



RATCHET GLADIATOR

PLAY AS MR. SUNSHINE IN MULTI-PLAYER MODE

Enter multi-player mode and create a profile. Make an account on insomniacgames.com with the same name as your profile. Go online with the game, log on to the web site, select the "Edit Profile" option, then hold L2 and press ←, ↓, →, ←, ↓, ↑(2), ← to unlock the Mr. Sunshine skin as a multi-player option.

PLAY AS VERNON IN MULTI-PLAYER MODE

Enter multi-player mode and create a profile. Make an account on insomniacgames.com with the same name as your profile. Go online with the game, log on to the web site, select the "Edit Profile" option, then hold L2 and press ←, →, ↓, ←, ↓, ↑, →, ↑ to unlock the Vernon skin.

EXTERMINATOR CARDS

Complete the indicated task to get the corresponding Exterminator card:

ACE HARDLIGHT: Get 4,000,000 Dread points.
EVISERATOR: Get over 100 Max Nanotech.
REACTOR: Buy all the Mega weapon versions, including the Harbringer.
SHELLSHOCK: Get all weapons and Omega mods.
VOX: Get all Skill Points.
VOX'S PET: Successfully complete all missions on the highest difficulty setting.

SKILL POINT BONUSES

Collect the indicated number of Skill Points to unlock the corresponding bonus:

COLOUR BLIND: 120 Skill Points
EXTERMINATOR BOT HEADS: 20 Skill Points
GANGSTA GUNS: 10 Skill Points
HUD COLOR: 5 Skill Points
KILL QUARK!: 105 Skill Points
MIRRORED WORLD: 15 Skill Points
REMOVE HELMET: 15 Skill Points
SUPER BLOOM: 25 Skill Points
SUPER MORPHING FREEZE WRENCH: 35 Skill Points
WEATHER: 60 Skill Points

THE WARRIORS

ARMIES OF THE NIGHT MINI-GAME

Successfully complete the game on the Bopper (or higher) difficulty setting to unlock the Armies Of The Night arcade machine at the hub. Here, you play as Swan and Ajax in Double Dragon style stages. The object of the game is the save Mercy, who has been captured by the Riffs.

GHOST CHARACTERS

Successfully complete the Armies Of The Night minigame to unlock Ghost Swan, Ghost Ajax, Ghost Cyrus, Ghost Fox, and Ghost Cleon.

THE SIMS 2

EXTRA LOCATIONS

ALIEN CRASH SITE: Fulfil all of XY-XY's aspirations and make him friends with Jonas. This will unlock The Bio-Dome.
CLIFFSIDE RETREAT: Fulfil all of Isabella's Wants and make her happy. Note: It may be difficult and take some time to get her to make a sandwich.
HMS AMORE: Fulfil all of Betty's Wants until she is Platinum. She will then tell you where the next location is. One of her wants will be to marry Captain Nelson.
JUGEN HOUSE: Fulfil all of Toothless Joe's aspirations until your Sim gets "Visit New Location" as one of their aspirations. Then, go back to Tranquillity Falls and your aspiration will change to "Help Chantal". To do this, just keep fulfilling her wants until she is Platinum (a job in Art). This will unlock the Alien Crash Site.
ORBIT ROOM: Become friends with Red S, then serve him some food. Then, move back to Sunset Canyon and make Red S and Helga fall in love and get married. Red S will now live there, and you can control him. Do whatever is needed to get Red S in a Platinum mood. He will tell you how to get to Tranquility Falls.
ROCKWALL ACRES: Follow the instructions given to unlock this area.
SHORELINE TRAILS: Buy a Foosball Table. When a Want that is described as "Beat Torin at Foosball" appears, wait for Torin to play, then click the "Challenge" option and defeat him at the game.
SUNSET CANYON: Bring Helga, Billy, and Sheila back to life,

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT 2

INVINCIBILITY

Pause the game in Story, Instant Action, or Galactic Conquest mode and press ↑(3), ←, ↓(3), ←, ↑(3), ←, →. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound. Repeat the code to disable its effect.

INFINITE AMMUNITION

Pause the game in Story, Instant Action, or Galactic Conquest mode and press ↑, ↓, ←, ↓(2), ←, ↓(2), ←, ↓(3), ←, Right. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound. Note: Your ammunition will decrease, but will refill instantly after reloading.

FUNNY CAPTIONS WHEN REBELS ARE KILLED

Pause the game in Story, Instant Action, or Galactic Conquest mode and press ↑, ↓, ←, ↓, ←, →. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound. Repeat the code to disable its effect.

SLOW MOTION SOUNDS

Pause the game in Story, Instant Action, or Galactic Conquest mode and press ↑(3), ←, ↑, ↓, ↑(2), ←, ↓(3), ←, ↑, ↓(2), ←, Right. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.

DISABLE HUD

Pause the game in Story, Instant Action, or Galactic Conquest mode and press ↑(4), ←, ↑(2), ↓, ←, ↓, ↑(2), ←, →. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound. Repeat the code to disable its effect.

ALL HERO CLASSES

Select Instant Action mode, then choose Mos Eisley as your level and Assault as the game type. When you begin the game you can pick between Heroes and Villains and fight as any of the "Hero" type character classes with no time limit.

HERO CHARACTER LOCATIONS

The hero characters can be found at the following locations:

AAYLA SECURA: Felucia: Fungi Forest, Jabba's Palace.
ANAKIN SKYWALKER: Mustafar: Refinery.
BOBA FETT: Kashyyyk: Beachhead, Utapau: Sinkhole, Mygeeto: War-Torn City, Felucia: Fungi Forest, Yavin 4: Temple, Jabba's Palace.
CHEWBACCA: Kashyyyk: Beachhead, Felucia: Fungi Forest, Yavin 4: Temple.
COUNT DOOKU: Geonosis: Dust Plains.
DARTH MAUL: Coruscant: Jedi Temple, Mustafar: Refinery, Jabba's Palace.
DARTH VADER: Tantive IV: Interior, Coruscant: Jedi Temple, Dagobah, Naboo: Theed, Hoth: Echo Base, Endor.
EMPEROR: Polis Massa: Medical Facility, Naboo: Theed, Death Star: Interior.
GENERAL GRIEVOUS: Tantive IV: Interior, Utapau: Sinkhole, Polis Massa: Medical Facility, Dagobah, Mygeeto: War-Torn City.
HAN SOLO: Utapau: Sinkhole, Polis Massa: Medical Facility, Endor.
JANGO FETT: Kashyyyk: Beachhead, Felucia: Fungi Forest, Yavin 4: Temple.
KI-ADI-MUNDI: Mygeeto: War-Torn City.
LUKE SKYWALKER: Coruscant: Jedi Temple, Mygeeto: War-Torn City, Jabba's Palace, Death Star: Interior, Hoth: Echo Base.
MACE WINDU: Geonosis: Dust Plains, Coruscant: Jedi Temple, Yavin 4: Temple, Death Star Interior.
OBI-WAN: Utapau: Sinkhole, Mustafar: Refinery, Naboo: Naboo: Naboo: Theed.
PRINCESS LEIA: Tantive IV: Interior, Naboo: Naboo: Theed.
YODA: Kashyyyk: Beachhead, Tantive IV: Interior, Polis Massa: Medical Facility, Dagobah.

ACTION REPLAY CODES

THE NEW CODES FOR ACTION REPLAY MAX

You must enter the M code first for these codes to work.

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN (M)

4G4N-GYJ0-3DMPT
RECD-D5WC-Y09YH

INFINITE HEALTH

52VJ-8CWB-8M50D
E15E-5C88-5BBEV
N9AC-6AZ5-AJFJJ
9140-DRA7-8ZYF0
CRGQ-V747-T4NUJ
8894-5CT3-PNUK5
RXCZ-HH1P-Q4Y0X
PKMW-407Y-DPRRN

RACE TIMER CODES

VFDM-4GXN-EPDJW

L1+L2 TO STOP TIMER

MCTX-HFEC-FZHRW
PNBB-FTU8-4EFUF
VBW7-HCJ5-YN0TP
PNBB-FTU8-4EFUF
QFRK-TJFW-NNAW5

R1+R2 TO START TIMER

H9FD-TR0Z-QJ4QA
CDZN-1EZP-K5WA4
DXBT-VYV0-GQUTF
CDZN-1EZP-K5WA4
B123-PH95-1QCAT

UNLOCK CONTENT CODES

0TMG-4X0Y-NN8J5

UNLOCK EVERYTHING

4NWP-QF40-UHRHF
QKGF-B20N-KT7QH
MKAZ-YBG0-XK8VH

ALL CHARACTERS OPEN

TA0P-2K0F-E9QX2
QKGF-B20N-KT7QH
ZGB5-R294-81N2G

ALL LANDMARKS OPEN

KTDR-40X0-KA1QC
9QY0-K9NM-X5CNE
MJKD-50ZB-M3U4A

ALL COVERS OPEN

D5JM-1APF-9ARRT
AXK4-X63W-MY9X1
EN38-EZVY-RGX9J

ALL COSTUMES OPEN

DNFA-BP6B-34M87
F77G-J6T6-H6D38
TA37-UF83-DTAUZ

TONY HAWK'S US WASTELAND

(M)

54E9-7UMB-KDUY3
ZJUW-T46A-ZBRP3
K1MA-UWC9-6P57C
629B-H926-X8KR4
NT61-J8R1-FZQGU
KJU0-64QP-QBTXJ
BU9J-7Q7K-02FA6
9WYF-BH0H-6PX1Z
ANM1-5EX0-URAZT
99UY-KP6H-FC0ZH
VECP-3GNN-8NTV5
NE0J-VKXM-VRHD3
KHHY-Z1VC-P5PN5
HAD1-060P-41HVK
4V4J-672B-3RVCW
3JQF-BK84-0RY09
03AH-5PBC-9K2T7
8JKE-4GZN-KBJ3W
VX67-BK7X-30ZAZ

AR MAX < 3.14 FIX

XKJ0-NB9D-ME1GG
DWJP-WQFB-YYBVC
YA21-E394-E8GWQ
6Q1P-WB65-D54N7
CEVC-1G53-W5528
55TQ-X4EQ-F7GWX

WIN GOALS INSTEAD OF FAILING THEM

56HR-QHB5-G1319
CMR4-JM7B-F4MNU

Pro Tips

TRAINING YOU IN THE DARK ARTS OF PS2

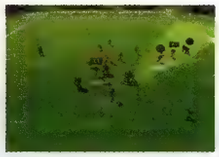
ACTION REPLAY CODES

TONY HAWK'S CONT.

INFINITE SPECIAL
AXWX-J3CM-HW6Y6
7K92-1BXZ-U9FTV
SPEED MODIFIER CODES
W7ER-KTPT-BPU2E
SLOW MOTION (PRESS L1+↑)
Z211-7EQN-21RZ6
0EYB-RQP6-CVECE
3A1X-MUJM-WQAJU
JD12-KBP6-5F8A8
QUICKER GAME (PRESS L1+→)
Y1R3-98NM-AHV2A
JDKM-CVW1-R6RBZ
WQ4D-6QYY-E7Z2E
JD12-KBP6-5F8A8
HYPER MODE (L1+←)
9GDH-U4FF-4N9GT
8C6F-H6K4-U31HY
ADNH-WETM-0E2KJ
JD12-KBP6-5F8A8
NORMAL SPEED (PRESS L1+↓)
AYH2-XCFV-5XXWF
PHEP-WYMV-KMA2X
JHJ5-ZKDN-6M3GB
F7AZ-KFHY-LIWGTP
UK CODES:
1C16-6D92-EU31D
ABOVE MAXED STATS
RWKT-GKU8-XUM9Y
JB9E-91K0-74840
MAXED OLLIE
NGF4-XPVR-FQRAX
3K7U-AN8T-2VERV
MAXED SPEED
EJIA-D71B-ZOXEK
4RJU-QY6F-U10DK
MAXED SPINS
VHXB-Fg1A-7QM8X
TJY3-VZC3-Z68TT

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5

(M)
36ZP-D9PH-16HYK
U7EU-05V2-N8FOD
2Y9H-J531-2MRWH
BBDK-ZQZF-1GTK0
RGFY-PZ8T-KX1P3
G9TJ-FQ8H-U03FC
KAD3-V60G-1QQ0Y
7K8H-6UY4-D5E02
06JX-ZMD7-JV6H7
XQWN-01EZ-Z8KWK
XHRX-4UKW-1G9G4
0ZEF-ZPU9-UBCJB
D9P3-9NE6-2VXTC
7QFR-PZ57-08E84
J2NF-GAQJ-EQJ9H
N8D4-9216-5RTYD
03AH-5PBC-9K2T7
2JQC-M178-ZZ2ZZ
ZZ68-XDAV-00RA9
HOME TEAM SCORE
A8M5-7C55-JG29V
L1 + R1 FOR 50 GOALS
ZRCW-18TX-108GQ
Q3XA-7F65-4NFMT
65A9-XCG5-8YVVV
AWAY TEAM SCORE
MP21-CDWC-ETVMU
L1 + R1 FOR 50 GOALS
H7MN-H70M-U7V8F
FD7W-KT64-NY0UA
47UG-5PU0-5QJEP
INFINITE PES POINTS
7Q02-U39G-JRYYY
7R7Z-B66E-JFY4X
INFINITE FUNDS
X1HN-U4PG-1A44D
Z3GN-T0EV-KB9QN



MADDEN NFL 06

CREATE LOW PAID ALL-STAR QB
Create a punter or kicker with all his attributes at maximum, including passing. You can sign him for a low salary because he is a kicker. Then, set him as the starting quarterback on the depth charts when the season begins. You will now have the best kicker/punter and QB in the league. You may also maximize all passing attributes and move the kicking attributes down to sign him at an even lower price, however this is only recommended if you rarely kick.

ONSIDE KICKS
This trick works with any kicker. When you are kicking off, select "Onside Kick" when the return team is switching formation. When they are set, take the power bar all the way to the top, but do not select it. Bring it all the way down so that the power is at 31. Next, make your accuracy 97 to 99. The ball will hit the ground and go up straight up in the air every time. Have one of your players that is close to the ball sprint toward it. This makes all your players follow, and you will usually get it.

EASY SACKS
Be a defensive lineman and back up a few feet. When the play starts, immediately run forward and Hitsick an offensive lineman. He will fall down and your player will still be running fast towards the quarterback to sack him.

EASY TRAINING CAMP POINTS
While on offense, choose a tactic with three receivers; Trip Bunch in Single Back formation works very well. Put the defense on the goal line with Zone CB cover. By doing this, no one will rush your QB, and once your receiver gets past the zone, they will be left unguarded in the endzone for an easy 48 points per play almost all of the time. This should work with most short zone coverages and does not take many attempts to learn which receiver to pick, mostly anyone running a long slant.

PUNTING
Since the punt blockers do not block very much, it is better if you select the "Punt Block" formation instead of any other punt return formation. With the "Punt Block" formation, the punting team will not be spread out, therefore allowing your blockers to somewhat block for you; which in turn will give you more time to field the ball and have a little space to start something big.

TOUCHDOWN CELEBRATIONS
Play as the Eagles against the Ravens and score a touchdown with T.O. by diving in the endzone. He will do a Ray Lewis dance in the endzone as a celebration. If you are playing as either Donovan McNabb or Daunte Culpepper and you get tackled going into the endzone and scoring a touchdown, they will do their trademark dances. Daunte will "get his roll on" and Donovan will do the moonwalk. Check out their dancing feet.

AGENTS IN NFL SUPERSTAR MODE
The agents you get are based on the talent of your player. For example, if your player's overall rating is at least 84, you will get Dan Baker as an agent. When importing players, that RBs get better overall ratings, no matter how many Heismans or any other awards they have won. Your superstar's overall rating is based on your Heisman over ratings, that is then randomly altered slightly each time you import. When importing from NCAA Football 06, player's stats are randomly done. You can retry for better stats. The interview after the mentor meeting determines some stat boosts, including important stats for your player's position.

CHOOSING AN AGENT IN NFL SUPERSTAR MODE
If you have a player whose personality rating is "Disruption", select Jason Morales as your agent. He can usually get you a movie deal before the first season starts. Stay away from Aubrey DeLong, as he is not a good negotiator and it takes forever to get an endorsement deal.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN NFL SUPERSTAR MODE
Make sure to choose your answers to interview questions wisely. The answers will affect your personality type and most endorsement companies want a player with a more conservative personality type, such as "Team Leader" or "Professional". Also, when starting NFL Superstar mode try to select a father that is a Hall Of Famer and a mother or father that has a high IQ.

When choosing your parents, look for Olympic sprinters or a Hall Of Fame DB dad (it will say that he ran a 4.2 for scouts). Do not worry about being too weak for the position, just make your player very muscular. Your DE or LB player will be very quick and you will destroy offenses.

NEW APARTMENT IN NFL SUPERSTAR MODE
If you win a Super Bowl and are inducted to the Pro Bowl, you will move into a new apartment.

MANSION IN NFL SUPERSTAR MODE
Win the Super Bowl twice and get into the Pro Bowl each time to get a mansion.

MORE CONTROL IN DRAFT IN NFL SUPERSTARMODE
Save the game before the draft. If you do not like the team that drafted you, reload your saved game and try it over again until you are drafted by a desired team.

BECOME A BETTER PLAYER IN NFL SUPERSTARMODE
Make sure your father is a Hall of Fame RB. When you get drafted, try to get on a team like the 49ers or any team with a bad RB. With those teams you will excel. Also if you get in the playoffs, play the games with two minute quarters. They are quick and easy to win.

SWITCHING TEAMS IN NFL SUPERSTAR MODE
Once you become a key player to a team, you can upgrade to a much better agent. Then, after two seasons you can resign and move over to almost any team you desire.

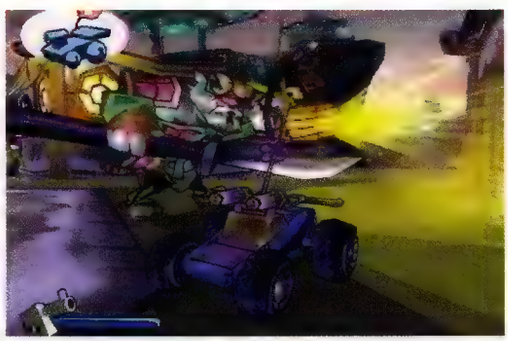
build a kitchen, clean up the mess, build a bathroom, and give them beds to sleep in. They will then tell you about the next location.

TRANQUILITY FALLS: Fulfil all of Larry and Chantal's wants to put them in a Platinum mood. After both are in a Platinum mood they will tell you where Jugen House's is located, and it will be unlocked.

APHRODISIAC EFFECT MEAL
Ostrich and Passion Fruit; or Carrot, Lime, Pork, and Passion Fruit. Most things made with Ostrich or Passion Fruit will have the aphrodisiac effect, although some have a very negative effect indeed (black hearts) that will lower your Sim's mood.

ENERGY BOOST EFFECT MEAL
Make a concoction of Dangleberry, Yoghurt, Strawberries, and Cherries; or Ostrich, Eel, Strawberries, and Mangosteen (expensive but works the best). Sandwiches that boost energy (also is a love dish) are Ostrich, Pork, Strawberry, Wheat Bread.

SKILLS BOOST EFFECT MEAL
To temporarily boost all your Sim's stats by three, create a meal using Egg, Milk, Whole White Flour, and Corn Oil. Put it in a food processor, then



in an oven. The meal will have sparkles coming out of it. Alternately, create a meal using Chicken, Onion, Egg, and Milk or Carrot, Egg, Milk, and Whole White Flour.

SLY 3: HONOR AMONG THIEVES

FLY TOONAMI PLANE
Pause the game while flying the default plane, then press R1(2), →, ↓(2), →. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.

DEFEATING THE BLACK BARON
This fight begins with an air fight. First, shoot his ship down. When you get to the fist fight, wait until he throws a big uppercut, then hit him while he is stunned. Once he gets to two-thirds of his health, he will send out guards to defeat you. If you are low on health, look for health icons that they drop. When you continue the fight against the Baron, he will have a second attack. When he growls and gets angry, he will jump on the wing of the plane. Jump to avoid this attack. Once he gets to one third of his health, he will send out more guards. When you defeat them and the fight continues, the guards will still be coming. Use the guard that sprays oil and ignites the oil against the Baron. Lure him to the oil and keep him there until he is set on fire.

DEFEATING DON OCTAVIO
To defeat Don Octavio, wait for Sly's signal to lure Octavio to the tar pit. Get close to the tar pit and wait until he gets stuck in the tar, then punch him rapidly. Don has three attacks. He will ram you, punch you, and when half his health is depleted, he will send a sonic boom toward you. Once his health is half depleted, you will have to run to another tar pit. Hold R1 to sprint and follow Sly to the next pit. Run away or sidestep when he tries to charge at you, and back away when he punches you. To dodge the sonic boom, jump over it or back away from it.

DEFEATING GENERAL TSAO (LAPTOP RETREIVAL)
To defeat General Tsao on the treetops, wait until he super jumps across the forest to try to hit you. When he does that, super jump at him, then double jump to change direction and hit him. Keep doing this until you go to the forest. When the fight begins inside the forest, it is pretty basic. Wait until he is done attacking, then hit him. When he flies off, sprint to where he is and hit him again. Once in awhile, he will duck down and rapidly spin. When he ducks, jump away from him. When he is done with that attack, keep hitting him. He will gain black magic powers at two thirds of his health, but if you keep hitting him repeatedly, he will not have time to use many of them.

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND

PLAY AS JASON ELLIS
Enter "sirius-DJ" as a code to unlock Jason Ellis. Alternately, successfully complete Story mode on the Normal difficulty setting.

PLAY AS MAT HOFFMAN
Enter "the_condor" as a code to unlock Mat Hoffman. Alternately, successfully complete Classic mode on the Hard or Sick difficulty settings.

PLAY AS MINDY
Enter "helpinghand" as a code to unlock Mindy. Alternately, simply successfully complete Story mode on the Easy difficulty setting.

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2736	23768	50 CENT	Outta control
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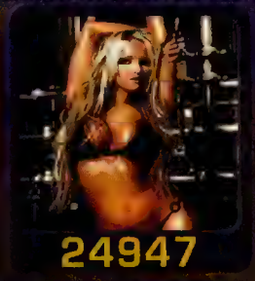
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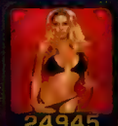
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LIBERTY CITY STORIES: THE HARDEST BITS

Most of the missions in *LCS* are pretty straightforward, but a choice few are absolutely brutal. Here are the 15 we reckon will cause you the most strife...

SMASH AND GRAB

Island: Portland **Difficulty:** ★★★☆☆ **Reward:** $1000

Salvatore's boys are in a tight spot – three of them have been pinned down by the fuzz in the gas station near the bomb shop. Your best bet is to grab a Sentinel and charge through the SWAT trucks blocking the entrance. If you're worried about being yanked out of your car, hang back, exit your vehicle and use a long-range weapon (the SMG will do) to mop up the on-foot fuzz. Drive up to your guys before their health bar depletes and they'll get in the car with you. Then it's a simple case of screaming over to the pay 'n' spray, losing the tail and driving the useless tits back to Vincenzo's place by the docks. Job done.

THE GUNS OF LEONE

Island: Portland **Difficulty:** ★★★☆☆ **Reward:** $3000

The thing to remember for this mission is that you should ignore everything the game tells you. If you follow the instructions, you're only making it harder. So when it tells you to go to the roof across the street and take the sniper rifle, take it, get to the sniper spot and then immediately switch to a machine-gun. When Salvatore starts battling the Sindaccos, jump down to street level and take them out with the SMG. Forget sniping – it's impossible with the PSP's analogue stick. Follow the Don and his henchmen, wipe out all the Sindaccos and the sex club will become Leone property.

CALM BEFORE THE STORM

Island: Portland **Difficulty:** ★★★★☆
Reward: $3000

Leone rival Massimo is taking a helicopter across town and it's your job to track him. Firstly, you have a minute and a half to reach Salvatore's mansion, then you have to stay under the chopper and track its movements. Use a PCJ for this – you'll need both speed and the ability to weave between traffic. His first stop is the construction yard near Hepburn Heights. After this, follow him to Chinatown and climb to the roof. The Triads will start attacking, so waste them, including the ones on the ground below. Watch out for the snipers on the roof – they can take you out with just a few shots.

A VOLATILE SITUATION

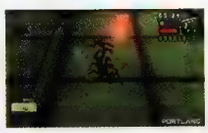
Island: Portland **Difficulty:** ★★★★☆
Reward: $1000

Sindacco snitch JD tips Toni off about a plan to destroy a Leone-run casino in downtown St Mark's. Before you accept the mission, stock up on SMG ammo and get yourself a PCJ bike. Drive to the casino and wait for the first wave of Sindacco hitmen to arrive. The moment they appear on the map (as a red triangle), go after *them*. Before they get anywhere near the casino, fire at them from your bike and destroy their car. After three waves of goons, they'll drive a bomb truck up to the front of the casino. Jack it as soon as it pulls up and drive it away. Once the "safe distance" meter is full, run the Hell away to avoid explosive death.

THE PORTLAND CHAINSAW MASQUERADE

Island: Portland **Difficulty:** ★★★★☆
Reward: $3000

Vincenzo wants you to help him out with a shipment. Go to the tanker moored by his place at the docks and enter the door marked by the yellow circle. Once inside, run through the dark corridors until you see a small alcove to the right. It's absolutely necessary that you pick up the Colt Python stashed here, otherwise the mission will be nigh-on impossible to complete, and even so, it's still sodding hard. Enter the cargo bay and scores of chainsaw-wielding hoodlums will come running at you. This is where the Python comes in handy because it kills them with one shot. When they're all dead, waste the treacherous Vinnie to finish the mission.



DRIVING MISTER LEONE

Island: Portland **Difficulty:** ★★★☆☆
Reward: $4000

You'll be glad to know that this is the last Portland mission. Anyway, go to Salvatore's mansion and pick him up. Take the Sentinel parked outside his mansion, *not* the PCJ – you're constantly hounded by the fuzz during this mission. He needs to get to Staunton Island, so drive to the ferry dock. The cops got there first, though, and you immediately get a three star wanted level. Turn around and Salvatore will tell you to drive towards the Callahan Bridge. When you get there, drive as fast as you can towards the ramp jutting out of the middle and you'll soar in slow-mo to Staunton. Drive to the safehouse.

TAKING THE PEACE

Island: Staunton **Difficulty:** ★★☆☆☆ **Reward:** $2500

Salvatore has parked a van near the hospital that'll let you control Paulie Sindacco's rigged car. The scene will switch to Paulie driving around Staunton, clueless. Press ⊗ at any time to take control of his car and the view will switch to first-person. You have five minutes from the moment you press ⊗ to take out every Forelli marked on the map. You can't drive-by or get out of the car (obviously), so you'll have to run them over. Make sure you have enough speed or you'll just knock them over. A couple of Forellis may run outside of the alleyway, so mop them up to finish the mission. This unlocks Sal's next phone mission in Belleville.

ROUGH JUSTICE

Island: Shoreside **Difficulty:** ★★☆☆☆ **Reward:** $4000

Salvatore's in jail, but that doesn't mean he can't still give orders. Go to the costume shop marked by the shirt icon on the map and get yourself the lawyer outfit. Go back to the station and Sal will brief you. You have to team up with a gang of local Hoods and wipe out two large groups of Forelli brothers. They won't go for you until you destroy their cars, so hang back and blow them up with your rocket launcher, or whatever heavy weapon you have. The Hoods are useless, so don't wait up for them – go solo, hang back and take out the on-foot soldiers. Some have a habit of getting trapped in doorways, so keep your eyes open for stragglers.

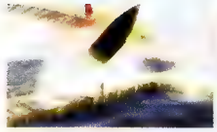
SHOGUN SHOWDOWN

Island: Shoreside **Difficulty:** ★★★★☆ **Reward:** $6000

The Yakuza have a 'special' stash on Staunton and Salvatore wants it destroyed. Shoot over the suspension bridge and roll up to the compound. It's heavily-guarded and it seems there's no way in. But there is. Obviously. After a few minutes, a Yakuza car will leave the compound, causing the gate to open. This is your cue to charge in with your assault rifle. Take out the assorted goons and turn the corner – yes, the stash is a tank! You have to destroy it, though, so take it to the bomb shop near your Staunton safehouse, causing chaos and destruction along the way. Stand well back and detonate the bomb to complete the mission.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT

Island: Staunton **Difficulty:** ★★★★☆ **Reward:** $2000



This scrolling shoot-'em-up mission can be difficult because of the wonky analogue stick, but you can make life a little easier for yourself if you hold down the L1 button to slow your aiming down. The first wave of enemies are on the rock to your left. Go for their heads to wipe them out quickly. Next up, a jetty loaded with agents. Shoot the explosive barrels near them to cause splash damage and leap over the ramp. Fend off the speedboats by shooting their drivers, cross another jetty and then a helicopter arrives. Shoot the agents so they fall off the sides, then blow it up.

DEAD RECKONING

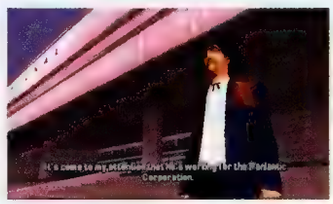
Island: Shoreside **Difficulty:** ★★☆☆☆ **Reward:** $5000

The time has finally come to rub out Paulie Sindacco. Before you begin the mission, jack a PCJ or a Sanchez – you'll need to be quick from the off. Find your way to the yellow marker at the bottom of the dam (you have to follow a complex series of roads to get there) and it'll trigger a cut-scene. Paulie and a group of loyal Sindacco thugs spot you and he gives the order to attack before slicing away on a speedboat. The trick is to ignore the thugs near you and just shoot those on bikes. Paulie has a speech to give, which means his boat crawls along. Get ahead of him and one rocket should do it.

PANLANTIC LAND GRAB

Island: Shoreside **Difficulty:** ★★★★☆ **Reward:** $6500

In this mission you have to murder Burt Reynolds. Or, at least, the character he voiced in Vice City, Texan millionaire Avery Carrington. Drive Donald Love to the airport. Carrington will drive away, protected by two Hummers filled with gunmen. The trick here is to get rid of the gunmen first. Perform a drive-by and you can blow them up easily. Now for Carrington. You *mustn't* blow up his car. Pop his tyres with bullets and fire at him in short bursts. After some ramming and gunfire he should be spooked enough to leave the car. Kill him and take the plans.



STOP THE PRESS

Island: Shoreside **Difficulty:** ★★★☆☆ **Reward:** $4500

Some reporter has been taking photos of Toni's 'antics' and you need to get them back else you'll be all over the newspapers. The journalist is in the graveyard behind the church (look for the alleyway with the bollard), so drive over there and meet him. You have to scare him into telling you where the photos are. You can do this by either punching him around a bit or holding a suitably large weapon at his face until the 'fear meter' is full. He'll lead you to his lockup, but he distracts Toni and drives away on a scooter. You have to give chase on a scooter of your own. Hunt him down and waste him with an SMG. He's really, really fast.

MORE DEADLY THAN THE MALE

Island: Shoreside **Difficulty:** ★★★☆☆
Reward: $7000

Your goal here is an arms shipment guarded by dozens of Yakuza gangsters. Make your way to the wooden pier marked on the map and stay well back. Use your sniper rifle to clear the area of any visible mobsters then charge in with an automatic weapon to mop up the rest. When the area is clear, steal the blue speedboat and go to the top of Staunton to meet up with Phil. On the way, Yakuza boats will try and blow you up. You can either fend them off with drive-by shooting, fire rockets from the boat or just drive straight through them. Gain enough speed and they'll get nowhere near you, so this is probably the best idea.

MORGUE PARTY RESURRECTION

Island: Shoreside **Difficulty:** ★★★★★
Reward: $4000

Take Donald and retrieve the bodies of the journalist Ned Burns and Avery Carrington. Go for Burns first, who's on Staunton Island. When you enter the hearse you'll get a two-star wanted level, so drive straight ahead from where you entered the car to get a bribe and lower it. Time is tight, so drive the corpse back to the marked hangar in the airport on Shoreside as quickly as possible. When you've delivered it, find the hospital and take the ambulance that contains Avery's body. The ambulance topples over easily, so keep it steady. The cops ram you a lot and you can't risk rolling. Go to the airport hangar again and that's that.

PORTLAND

HARWOOD

ST MARKS

HEPBURN HEIGHTS

RED LIGHT DISTRICT

PORTLAND BEACH

PORTLAND ROCK

PORTLAND VIEW

CHINATOWN

TRENTON

PORTLAND HARBOUR

CALLAHAN POINT

ATLANTIC QUAYS

KEY
Hidden Packages
Odd Jobs
Rampages
Stunts
Weapons
ASPATRIA
ROCKFORD
FORT STAUNTON
LIBERTY CAMPUS
NEWPORT
BELLEVILLE PARK
CALLAHAN BRIDGE
TORRINGTON
BEDFORD POINT
STAUNTON ISLAND

Pro Tips

TRAINING YOU IN THE DARK ARTS OF PS2

KEY
- ..... Hidden Packages
- ..... Odd Jobs
- ..... Rampages
- ..... Stunts
- ..... Weapons

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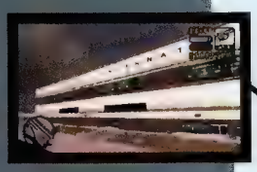
CEDAR RIDGE OBSERVATORY

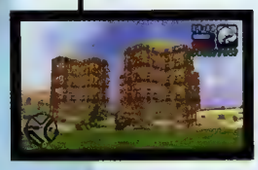
CEDAR GROVE

PIKE CREEK

WICHITA GARDENS



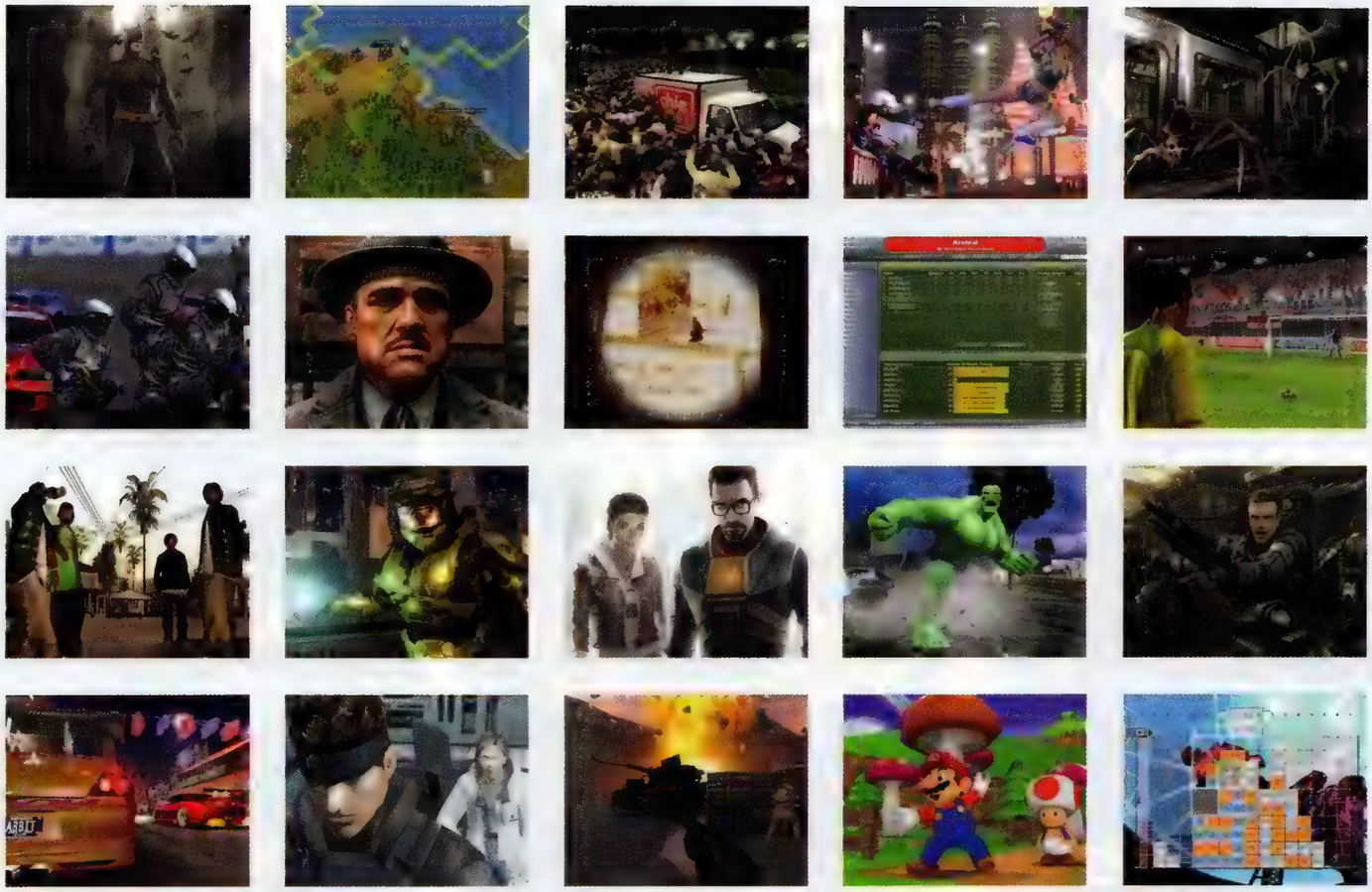
FRANCIS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



SHORESIDE VALE

SPECIAL COSTUMES

There are a few missions where your choice of costume is vital to their completion, but mostly they're just for show. Among the dozens of secret costumes to unlock (by finishing certain missions) are a Kill Bill-style 'Dragon' jumpsuit, a lovely hockey mask/overalls combo and a lawyer's suit. Dress to kill.



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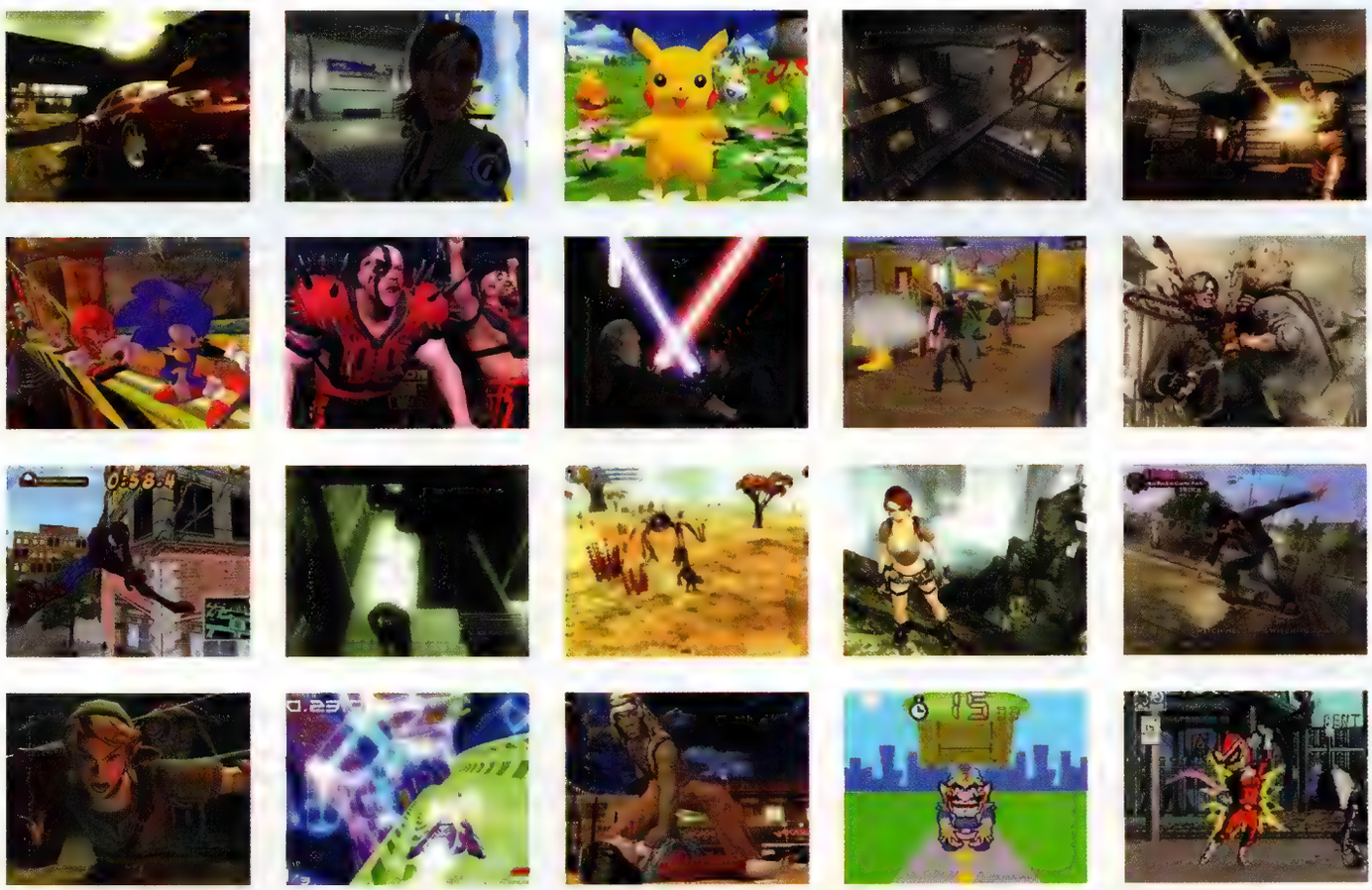

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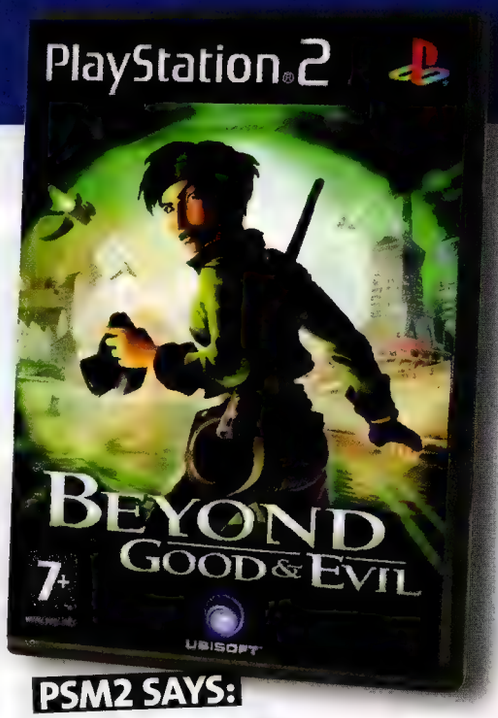

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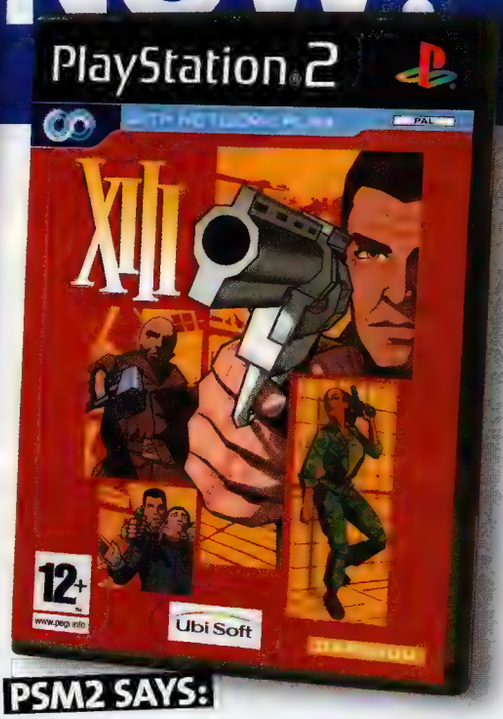

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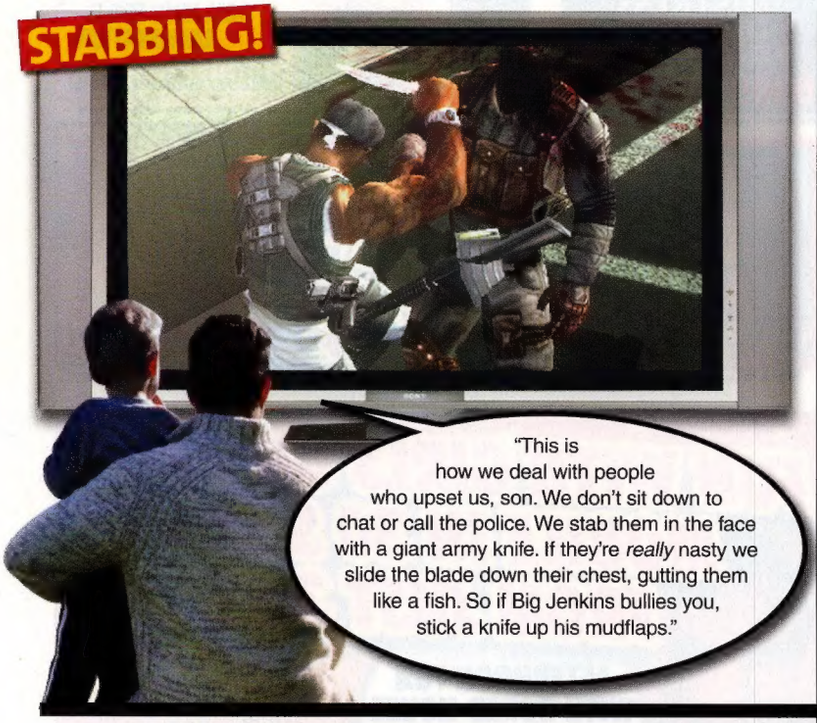

"This is how we deal with people who upset us, son. We don't sit down to chat or call the police. We stab them in the face with a giant army knife. If they're *really* nasty we slide the blade down their chest, gutting them like a fish. So if Big Jenkins bullies you, stick a knife up his mudflaps."

GUN CRIME!

"Sometimes a gun is the way to get the job done. If you need to administer death quickly, cock your piece and fill your enemy with hot lead. Get creative – perhaps slip under your enemy's legs and shoot them up the ass? People respect a man who can hold a gun… and discharge it up someone's chuff.

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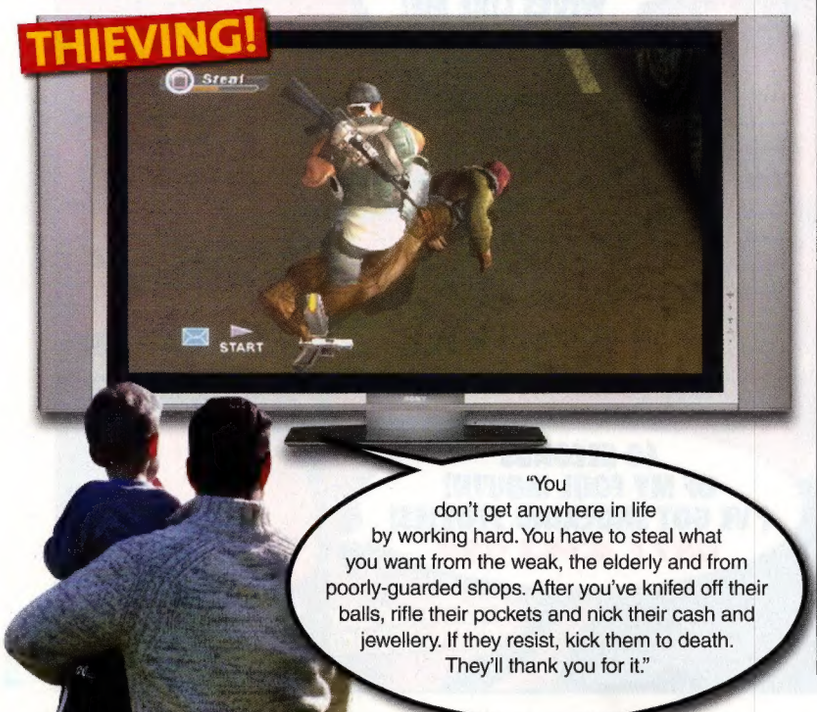

"You don't get anywhere in life by working hard. You have to steal what you want from the weak, the elderly and from poorly-guarded shops. After you've knifed off their balls, rifle their pockets and nick their cash and jewellery. If they resist, kick them to death. They'll thank you for it."

GANG-BANGING!

"You have to remember, son, you can't make it in this world alone… you need a gang of ruthless murderers for friends. And, if the law finger you, simply blame them and cry like a big, mumble-chopped baby all the way to borstal. And – if they're disloyal – murder everyone."

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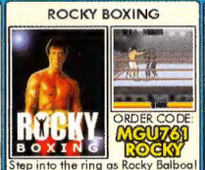
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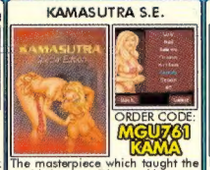
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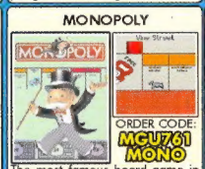
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